

**EXPLORING CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED
STUDENTS AT A FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE IN KWAZULU-
NATAL PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

For physically challenged students, inequalities in further education begin with inequalities that have shaped the whole schooling system in South Africa. The limited provision that exists for physically challenged students at further education and training colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province, especially black physically challenged students, means that for these students there is a very high level of exclusion from the education system. Many students with physical challenges still need an ally even in their basic accommodation.

The focus of this research was on exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at “Mango” (pseudonym) Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. That investigation was conducted in terms of the availability of resources for physically challenged students at Further Education and Training Colleges, the use of learner support services, accessibility of buildings for these students and the roles played by parents of physically challenged students at Further Education and Training Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

This study was therefore designed to explore not only the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province, but also their experiences and responses to such challenges. This research study was conducted with students who were physically challenged and their lecturers from Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The sample of the population included six participants who were physically challenged students and four participants who were lecturers teaching physically challenged students at Mango FET College. Furthermore, participants comprised both females and males who were doing different levels at the college, i.e. NQF level two, NQF level three and NQF level four students. The research study sought to explore the challenges experienced by such physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province in order for the college to meet these students’ academic needs.

Observations and semi-structured interviews were the main data-collection tools used in the study. Results from the current research study indicated that inaccessibility of buildings, lack of resources for physically challenged students, inadequate support from student support services and the college represented major barriers to the success of the physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Moreover, although student support services are available, the entire college population, students and staff alike, should all be responsible for creating an inclusive environment where students with physical challenges can experience a sense of community and attitudes of embracing diversity and accommodating differences.

The responsibility thus lies with all relevant role players of Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province who must work together to overcome social and academic barriers; to accommodate physically challenged students properly, provide them with accessible buildings, encourage parents to assist physically challenged students, endeavour to meet their academic, social and emotional needs and assist them to develop academically. In future, progress can be made through the increased coordination of student support services, building accessible buildings with ramps for physically challenged students, and providing adequate resources for these students.

DECLARATION

I, Michael Mbongiseni Buthelezi, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in the subject Inclusive Education at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. I confirm that the services of an external editor were used and I informed my supervisor about the identity and details of my editor. This research report has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signed:

Date:

Michael Mbongiseni Buthelezi

Signed:

Date:

Editor: N.R. Barnes

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my wife, Leona C. Buthelezi and two children, my daughter, Mikayla and my son, Quewin, who have supported me through thick and thin. I further dedicate this work to my late mother and father, Busisiwe and Wilson Buthelezi, in gratitude for imparting to me the values of hard work and dedication.

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My sincere appreciation goes to my beloved wife, Leona Anderson-Buthelezi, for taking responsibility for family leadership during my absence. Thank you for the support and guidance you have rendered to our children during my absence.

Thank you all so much.

ACRONYMS

FET	Further Education and Training
ITB	Information Technology and Business
Coltech	College of Technology
NCV	National Certificate Vocational
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authorities
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategies
SDA	Skills Development Act
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
DSS	Disability Support Services
SSS	Student Support Services
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
INDS	Integrated National Disability Strategy
SACPO	South African College Principals Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken to explore the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College. FET is an abbreviation for Further Education and Training. It refers to education and training that takes place after leaving school, even if only with a grade 9 completed. The researcher had been a teacher for more than ten years at school level before he joined Mango FET College as senior lecturer in the mathematics department. As a teacher, the researcher had experienced that mainstream schools in rural areas were enrolling physically challenged students and these schools did not have proper facilities for these learners. It had come to the researcher's attention that teachers in rural schools were not trained to teach physically challenged learners at mainstream schools. The researcher knows from experience that in rural areas most parents of children with disabilities do not expect their children to accomplish anything in a normal fashion and just showed lack of support and confidence.

1.1. The background of the study

At present, the researcher works as a senior lecturer at the Information Technology and Business (ITB) Campus of the Mango FET College. The researcher is also serving as a chairperson of student support services. Mango FET College is situated at Newcastle, in the Northern part of KwaZulu-Natal Province. Mango FET College has six campuses. The Information Technology and Business (ITB) Campus offers Report 191 business studies programmes, N4 to N6 as well as the National Vocational in Hospitality, Finance, Economics and Accounting, Information Technology and Computer Science. The campus had 750 students according to the "college of technology (coltech)" in 2012. College of Technology is a system that is used by FET Colleges to capture the students' details. At the time of the study (2012), five percent of the student population at this FET College had a physical disability. Most of these students were from a disadvantaged background and being disadvantaged implied that they were from poor families. The college did not have educational resources for physically challenged students such as adequate toilet facilities and accessible buildings. Lecturers at Mango FET College did

not receive in-service training regarding students' challenges, availability of resources and the explanation of the appropriate developmental needs of disabled students.

The college had tried to train lecturers in terms of assessment, facilitation and moderation, but there was still a gap when it came to training them about teaching physically challenged students. Physically challenged students did not receive education which was specifically geared to their particular problems. In other words lecturers did not have adequate knowledge about the counselling needs of students with physical disabilities and their parents. The lack of knowledge was caused by not receiving training about physical disability. In terms of counselling, the college had employed full-time counsellors for each campus. The attitudes of lecturers, parents, peers and the community towards physical disability constituted the main cause for physically challenged students to withdraw from interaction with them and cease trying to be independent.

As a result, these students became drop-outs and did not finish the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes. The college did not have enough assistance and support which would accomplish tasks never thought possible a decade ago. There were no planned interventions and programmes which took into account that these students had a right to their own choices to choose their destiny and be allowed to enjoy individual personal power in their lives. Physically challenged students were thus not fully motivated at Mango FET College.

1.2. Problem formulation

Buuren (1990) argues that the inadequacy of basic health screening in schools is of immediate concern to him and that many physical health problems are easily treated if they are picked up at school but have been left unidentified and untreated. Donald (1994) further adds that most of the learners with physical disabilities live under conditions of poverty and social disadvantage. That is true in a sense that most physically challenged

students at Mango FET College were from poor families and that made them not perform very well. These socio-economic disadvantages resulted in a high rate of absenteeism which impacted negatively on students' performance levels.

Terre Blanche (2004) also indicates that the development of a community requires careful collaboration with community members and the tapping of local knowledge. The college did not fully involve parents of physically challenged students. According to Nsamenang (2004), the family is an important structure as it lays the foundation for a child's development even before the child is born and it prepares the child to acquire skills in interpersonal processes and communication. Thus the family is the secure base on which students should build the confidence needed to relate to others and the world.

The researcher agreed with Nsamenang (2004) in the sense that students with physical disabilities at Mango FET College were not fully assisted by their parents and lecturers in terms of educational support and motivation. These students with physical disabilities often had a poor self- image, which resulted in the formation of a negative self-concept. These feelings of poor self-esteem resulted in an inferiority complex which had a negative impact on their academic achievements and social development. Morrow (1985) argues that these thoughts make the child feel that he or she is a burden, no good, not wanted, a disgrace or untouchable. This causes a distance between physically disabled students and non-disabled students. The barrier of others' attitudes thus remains high.

Friendships and relationships with other students remain difficult according to Kneedler, Hallalan, and Kauffman (1984). Consequently students with physical challenges at Mango FET College experienced socializing problems especially in mainstream education. The concept of one's achievements should be closely related to both the capabilities and limitations of one's structure, so that internal motivation will be realistically related to one's disabilities.

Kapp (1991) argues that physically disabled learners generally experience problems with mobility. Access to building at particular areas may cause problems. Where no special provision is made, certain buildings and areas remain inaccessible for physically

challenged students in schools. The researcher also agreed with Kapp (1991) that access to college buildings at Mango FET College was a problem for physically challenged students. Mango FET College was a double-storey building with no proper stairs for physically challenged students. Macleod (1998) states that specific learning needs of physically disabled learners in a disadvantaged social context are likely to be made worse by inadequate resources. Donald and Green (1995) also argue that similarly the number of learners with specific learning needs puts additional pressure on poor educational and social resources so that the entire context tends to get worse.

Donald and Green (1995) further state that educators are not given in-service training regarding various handicaps, the availability of resources for learners and the explanation of the appropriate psychosocial needs of disabled learners in schools. Mango FET College had the same problems of not having resources for physically challenged students, for example, there were no toilets and ramps for physically challenged students. Yet the college enrolled these physically challenged students as mentioned in the preceding sections. Hosie (1982) argues that to solve these problems, educators should learn the counselling needs of learners with physical disabilities and their parents. The college was not providing lecturers with education about the counselling needs of physically challenged students.

Kapp (1991) states that physically disabled learners require education which is specifically geared to their particular problems and potentialities. Parents therefore should play a role in the mainstreaming of learners with physical disabilities. It is also true that a child's development is disrupted when family life has failed to prepare for life or when school life fails to sustain the promises of earlier stages. Baumberger and Harper (2007) note that students with disabilities often need assistance in acquiring skills for independent living. Students with physical disabilities at Mango FET College suffered from discrimination and judgment of others; sometimes simply for the peculiar but harmless ways they conducted themselves.

1.3. Research question

Based on the above discussion, the following main research question was thus being asked:

- What are the general challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province?

1.3.1. Research sub-question

1.3.1.1. What are the specific challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province?

1.4. Research aim of the study

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

1.5. Research objective of the study

The objective of this study was to:

- 1.5.1. Identify challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

1.6. Research design and methodology

1.6.1. Research design

The research design was, thus, the framework of how the researcher intended to carry out the research study. It serves as the connection between the research question and the implementation of the research. Research design is different from the method by which data are collected. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), the purpose of the research study as well as the paradigm of the research study, the methodology and the context in which the study took place should be cohesive. The type of research question, therefore, required that this study followed an interpretive paradigm within a qualitative research methodology framework, since the reality to be studied consisted of participants' subjective experience of the external world (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

The researcher that works from the interpretive paradigm prefers to use personal and interactive means and methods to gather data (Mertens, 1998). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research, and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation. Moreover, paradigms represent the epistemological, the ontology and the methodological premises of the researcher (Neuman, 2000). A fundamental assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that subjective experience constitutes reality.

The aim was to discover the many perspectives of the participants from the point of view of their unique experiences. Epistemology within an interpretive paradigm refers to a concern in exploring and understanding the social world using both the participants' and the researcher's understandings (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003); it warrants a consideration of the role of the researcher within the research process

1.6.2. Research methodology

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the qualitative research method implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. The method used by qualitative researchers represents a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon under investigation (Silverman, 2000).

The unique qualities of qualitative research, which were appropriately applied in the current research study, include: a concern with the meaning that people construct from their world and their experiences. Additionally, qualitative research involves fieldwork, which means that the researcher must go to the setting or institution to observe behaviour, experiences, and perspectives in their natural setting (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research findings are typically in the form of themes and categories; they focus on process, meaning, and understanding; and the product of qualitative research, according to Merriam (1998). Miles and Huberman (1994) state that qualitative research involves small samples of people, studied by means of in-depth methods. Cresswell

(2003) further states that the qualitative method is undertaken with the aim to explore, discover, develop an understanding, describe and report on the study. The unique qualities of qualitative research, which were appropriately applied in the current research study, include a concern with the meaning that people construct from their world and their experiences (Merriam, 2002).

Qualitative research findings are typically in the form of themes and categories; they focus on process, meaning, understanding and the product of qualitative research, according to Merriam (2002). The concept paradigm refers to the way we observe, think and understand the world and draw conclusions about the phenomena. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a paradigm is a model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand and attempt to draw meaning from it. A paradigm can open up a new understanding about the nature of the world and theorising about the phenomena.

According to Rensberg (2005), the researcher should clearly understand the philosophical frameworks that guide the research activities, before making a choice of paradigm. Silverman (2000) further adds that the methods used by qualitative researchers represent a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon under investigation.

Rensberg (2005) further explains that the interpretative researcher constructs meaning from the data by seeing the bigger picture and by translating the raw empirical data into what is known as thick description. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 143) emphasise that “qualitative research ends with tentative answers about what was observed”.

1.6.3. Purposive sampling

According to Naidoo (2010), qualitative researchers usually work with small groups of participants. The individuals who are included in the group of participants should provide in-depth knowledge and insight into the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling was used in the present research study. Polit and Hungler (1999) define purposive

sampling as a form of non-probability sampling. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) add that qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources. Marshall (1996) also emphasises that the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question.

Merriam (1998) clarifies that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon and must, therefore, purposefully select participants who are rich in information regarding the phenomenon. Therefore, participants included should be knowledgeable, willing to participate and readily available (Greyling, 2008). Furthermore, purposive sampling takes place when the group of participants is homogeneous, sharing the experience of a particular situation (Willing, 2001).

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) further mention that purposive sampling is the most direct type of non-probability sampling and researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and previous research findings to deliberately obtain an analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.

1.7. Method of data analysis

Within a qualitative framework, data analysis begins by bringing together and organising all the information about the case at hand, for example the interview transcripts (Patton, 2002). Data analysis involves the process of transforming data to answer the initial research question, according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999). Data analysis is the systematic search for meaning; it is the process that involves making sense of data (Merriam, 1998).

The qualitative researcher's focus thereafter will be on interpreting and understanding the social world of the participants. The aim of analysis is to understand the various elements of the data and to identify patterns or themes (Mouton, 2001). The method of data analysis chosen for the research study was the interpretive paradigm.

1.7.1. Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the meanings that people give to their own social interactions. Winberg (1997) also argues that it exposes how individual and group interpretations of reality influence both intentions and actions. Rensberg (2005) asserts that humans can understand the world as it appears to them and as such the research knowledge is constructed in the minds of the people who are active in the research process. In understanding the phenomena under scrutiny, therefore, the researcher interacted with the participants, listened, cooperated and shared the experience.

Maxwell (2005: 17) argues that “qualitative research helps to understand the meanings for particular events, situations, experiences and actions of participants”. Babbie and Mouton (2001) also argue that in understanding human actions therefore, the researcher should conduct an action research in a specific environment of the phenomena and uncover the reality on the ground. Hence, interpretative qualitative research helps in understanding in-depth, participants` cultural norms, values, experiences and perceptions within their social context. According to Willing (2001), the interpretative method aims to explore the research participants` experience from his or her perspective, it recognises that such an exploration must necessarily implicate the researcher`s own view of the world as well as the nature of the interaction between the researcher and participant. “Interpretive research is fundamentally concerned with meaning and it seeks to understand social members` definition of a situation”(Schwandt, 1994: 118). Interpretive theory involves building a second order theory or theory of members` theories in contrast to positivism which is concerned with objective reality and meanings thought to be independent of people. Interpretivists assume that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation hence there is no objective knowledge which is independent of thinking, reasoning humans. This research investigates how the objective features of society (e.g. organisations, social classes, technology and scientific facts) emerge from, depend on, and are constituted by subjective meanings of individuals and intersubjective processes such as discourses or discussions in groups (Gephart, 1993). In a sense, interpretivist constructivism “brackets” objective reality and seeks to show

how variations in human meanings and sensemaking generate and reflect differences in reified or objective realities (Gephart, 1993).

1.8. Data collection

Data collection is the technique employed in research, to gather information from the phenomena under study and draw a meaningful understanding in accordance with research questions. Merriam (2002) defines the concept of data as: bits and pieces of information found in the environment that are collected in systematic ways to provide an evident base from which to make interpretations and statements intended to advance knowledge and understanding concerning a research question or problem.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 143) state that “qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data techniques that suit well with the research questions”. In this study the researcher used observations and interviews as the main tools for data collection. Patton (2002) argues that studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors than studies that use several methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks. Different types of data provide an opportunity for triangulation and ensure validity. The data that were collected during the study were qualitative. According to Cresswell (2003: 182), “qualitative research data (sic) is fundamentally interpretative”.

1.8.1. Observation

Atkinson and Hammersley (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) define observation as a ‘systematic data collection approach’. According to Fetterman (1998) participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people being studied with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data. Observation was appropriate for this study because the researcher recorded participants’ observations. In participation observation, the researcher observed the interactions of the participants involved as detached outsiders but experienced them first hand as insiders. The researcher became a member of the inner circle of the event that was being studied.

Maxwell (2005: 94) also mentions that “observation can enable you to draw inferences about the perspectives that you could not obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. It is of particular importance to get a tacit understandings and theory in-use as well as aspects of the participants’ perspectives that they are reluctant to directly mention in an interview”.

1.8.2. Semi-structured interviews

The subject of the qualitative research interview, thus, is the life-world of the interviewee and his or her relation to it (Kvale, 1983). According to Kvale (1996), the purpose of the qualitative research is depicted as the description and interpretation of themes in the subjects’ lived world.

The semi-structured interview guide provided a framework to make sure that all the relevant topics regarding the research study’s focus were covered during the interview session (Patton, 2002), but also allowed for greater flexibility in exploring certain topic areas in more depth as they arose. The topics were based on the effectiveness of the college in providing for students’ academic needs in terms of its support structures, services, and facilities, as well as its advantages and disadvantages. The outline of the interview guide, according to Patton (2002), increased the comprehensiveness of the data and made the data systematic for each participant. Logical gaps can be anticipated and can then be covered. Kvale (1983) reports that the qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life-world of the interviewee; and aims to obtain as many nuanced descriptions from the different qualitative aspects of the interviewee’s life-world as possible. Patton (2002) points out that some weaknesses of the interview guide approach include the fact that important and significant topics may be missed, as well as the flexibility of the interviewer in the sequencing of questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives, thus reducing the comparability of responses.

1.9. Significance of the research study

The primordial purpose of this study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal

Province. Thus, the results of this study benefited the lecturers, college administrators, physically challenged students, and department of higher education and training officials.

This study was significant because it provided indispensable facts about the unavailability of resources, inaccessibility of buildings, and shortage of educational resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. This study served as the basis for future plans of action by the college administrators with regard to the academic needs of physically challenged students.

The study was also helpful to the department of higher education and training in assisting and informing them in the area of resources and accommodation for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study also served as a future reference for researchers on the subject of physically challenged students at Further Education and Training Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province. And importantly, this research educated lecturers, and all stakeholders on how to deal with physically challenged students at Further Education and Training Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province. This study also encouraged other researchers to conduct a similar study with any organisation of their choice. Hopefully it demonstrated to the college administrators, lecturers, and department of higher education and training that they would be able to bring about changes before being instructed to change. Furthermore, this study served as a theoretical model for future studies of the same nature. Future researchers will benefit from this study, and it provides them with facts needed to compare their study findings at their respective times regarding usability.

1.10. Clarifications of terms

1.10.1. Parent

According to Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, “parent” includes all natural parents, whether they are married or not or any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person. Parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College did not fully involve themselves in the education of their children.

1.10.2. Inadequacy

According to wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn (downloaded 12 June 2012), inadequacy means not sufficient to meet a need. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) stress that a school with inadequate resources, too few classrooms, poor teaching and library resources, high pupil-teacher ratios and inadequately qualified teachers will struggle to help its students achieve.

1.10.3. In-serving training

[Http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/Literacy.htm](http://www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/Literacy.htm) (downloaded 03 June 2012) defines in-service training as an education for employees to help them develop their skills in a specific discipline or occupation. McDavis, Nutter and Lovett (1982) note that teachers in rural areas are not given in-service training regarding various handicaps, the availability of resources and explanation of the appropriate psychosocial needs of disabled learners.

1.10.4. Further education and training

This refers to learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from level two to level four of the National Qualifications Framework according to Government Gazette (2009).

1.10.5. Models of disabilities

According to Naidoo (2010), models of disability are tools for defining impairment and for meeting the needs of disabled people.

1.10.6. Social model

UPAIS (1976) defines social model as a progressive political concept that opposes the medical model commonly used in the health professions. It is also a concept which recognises that some individuals have physical or psychological differences which can affect their ability to function in society, according to the British Council of Disabled People (1981).

1.10.7. Medical model

According to The Open University (2006), the medical model is the model whereby disabled people are defined by their illness or medical condition. It further adds that this model is also called the individual model because it promotes the notion that it is the individual disabled person who must adapt to the way in which society is constructed and organised.

1.10.8. Recapitalisation grant

Recapitalisation grant is the grant that is given to further education and training colleges by the government in order to improve the delivery of vocational education programmes in order to respond to the skills needs of both the employed and unemployed youth, as well as adults, according to Garza (2011).

1.11. Chapter divisions

The content of the dissertation is as follows:

Chapter one

It outlines the introduction, background of the study which is about exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province, problem formulation, research question, research sub-questions, research aim, research objectives, research design and methodology, purposive sampling, method of data analysis, data collection, significance of the research study, clarifications of terms, chapter divisions, and conclusion.

Chapter two

It consists of the introduction to a literature review on challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province, background information, models of disability, theoretical framework, learner support services at Mango FET College, resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, accessibilities of buildings for physically challenged students, in-

service training for lecturers at Mango FET College which includes subheadings such as lecturer qualifications at FET Colleges and curriculum at FET Colleges, main agencies influencing vocational education and training, roles of parents in the education of their physically challenged students, and conclusion to literature review.

Chapter three

It focuses on the following: research design and methodology, method of data analysis, data collection, standards of quality and verification, limitation, ethical considerations, and conclusion.

Chapter four

This chapter concerns data analysis, and interpretation of findings, master themes, discussion of findings, summary of the main findings, conclusion to the findings, and conclusion.

Chapter five

Chapter five focuses on the introduction, significance of the research study, recommendations, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusion.

1.12. Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed the introduction of the topic called exploring the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It also covered the background of the study, problem formulation of the study, the research question, the research aim of the study, the research design and methodology, sampling, method of data analysis, data collection, significance of the research study, clarifications of terms, chapter divisions, and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature on challenges experienced by students with physical disabilities at tertiary institutions. According to Hart (1998), reasons for reviewing the literature include distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done. It was also about discovering important variables relevant to the topic, synthesising and gaining a new perspective. Hart (1998) further emphasizes that reviewing literature identifies relationships between ideas and practices, establishing the context of the topic. It also rationalised the significance of the problem and identified the main methodologies and research techniques that have been used and placed the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments.

The purpose of a literature review is also to integrate and generalise findings across units, treatments, outcomes and settings to resolve a debate within a field. Another goal according to Cooper (2006) is to critically analyse previous research, identify central issues or explicate a line of argument within a field as well as to identify and formulate the relevant theoretical framework for the study.

2.1. Background information

Garza (2011) mentions that in year 2000, a national landscape task team was established to develop an overall national strategy for the re-organisation of the FET sector. The national landscape task team used the proposals that had been presented by the provincial department of education, together with nationally agreed goals and objectives. The recommendations of the task team were published in July 2001 as *A New Institution Landscape for Public FET Colleges*. The document recommended the establishment of 50 public FET Colleges from the 152 technical colleges. The recommendations also included how many sites should be established per province and which sites should make up each of these colleges.

The document recommended that these colleges would be declared public colleges with new names and established councils. This was the responsibility of various Ministers of Education. In 2002 to 2006 the merger process took place. According to the National Landscape Task Team established in 2000, the merger involved putting together 152 technical colleges and establishing 50 public FET Colleges.

Garza (2011) further adds that there was training and development of college councils, the appointment of rectors at each of the 50 colleges and development of common administration and management systems across the various sites of the 50 colleges. In the KwaZulu-Natal Province, various technical colleges and skills centres merged to form 9 FET Colleges. Attention was paid to planning for the transformation of the college qualifications, teaching and learning as well as funding. Much of this preparation consisted of research aimed at gaining a better understanding of the sector with respect to student enrolment, full-time equivalents, programmes offered, lecturing staff and funding. The Mango FET College was established with six campuses.

In December 2005, the 50 colleges' re-capitalisation plans were approved and in April 2006 the first payments were made to colleges. These funds were allocated to support the delivery of priority skills programmes from 2007. In particular, funds were allocated for infrastructure development, procurement of equipment, development of administration systems and staff development as well as curriculum development. According to Garza (2011), in April 2005 government announced an allocation of R1.9 billion for the recapitalisation of FET Colleges over the period 2006/2007 to 2008/2009.

The focus of the FET College recapitalisation grant was to improve the delivery of vocational education programmes in order to respond to the skills needs of both the employed and unemployed youth, as well as adults. As stated by Garza (2011), this would be achieved by encouraging colleges to align their programmes with the needs of society and the labour market. Recapitalisation of FET Colleges was the response to the following: the need to increase employment and self-employment, develop the skills of the youth, improve the education system and improve the functioning of the labour market.

According to Garza (2011: 28) the following areas were the focus of the FET College Sector Re-capitalisation Conditional Grant:

- Re-skilling staff to offer responsive programmes.
- Upgrading physical infrastructure to offer vocational programmes.
- Providing suitable equipment to support programme delivery.
- Providing support for the development of modern vocational programmes.
- Establishing student support services units.
- Improve communications, information management and curriculum delivery.
- Buying or building of new classrooms, laboratories, offices etc.

Most of these areas were covered except the following: re-skilling of staff to offer responsive programmes for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, upgrading physical infrastructure to offer vocational programmes to physically challenged students, providing suitable equipment to support programme delivery for physically challenged students and building classrooms that would be suitable for physically challenged students.

2.2. Models of disability

Naidoo (2010) defines models of disability as tools for defining impairment and for providing a basis upon which government and society can devise strategies for meeting the needs of disabled people. Naidoo (2010) further states that these models of disability are often treated with scepticism as it is thought that they do not reflect a real world, are often incomplete and encourage narrow thinking, and rarely offer detailed direction for action. Kaplan (2000) emphasises, however, that they are a useful framework in which to achieve an understanding of disability issues, and also of the perspective held by those creating and applying the models. We should therefore not see these models as a series of exclusive options with one superior in replacing previous sets. Their development and popularity provides us with a continuum on changing social attitudes to disability and where they are at a given time. They complement one another in offering attention to alternative dimensions within the analysis and conceptualisation of disability and

impairment. Naidoo (2010) further mentions that these models change as society changes.

2.2.1. The social model

UPAIS (1976) argues that the social model of disability is not a traditional diagrammatic model like many psychological and sociological models, but a progressive political concept that opposes the medical model commonly used in the health professions. The social model was developed with the aim of removing barriers within society so that disabled people have the same opportunities as everyone else to determine their own lifestyles. The strength of this model of disability lies in its placing the onus upon society and not the individual. The onus would thus lie with the colleges to adequately provide for students with disabilities and meet their diverse needs. In terms of the current research study, it would relate to a college's inability to adequately provide for the needs of its students with disabilities. In terms of appropriate policy, awareness, and positive attitudes to provide the support and accommodation required by the diverse range of disabled students that would represent the social exclusion of disabled students as well as the discrimination that resulted. Finally, the college along with barriers it created for students with disabilities was at fault; the problem lay there and not within the disabled student. The social model of disability makes an important distinction between the terms impairment and disability as follows:

Impairment - Lacking part or all of a limb or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body (including psychological mechanisms).

Disability - The restrictions caused by the organisation of society which does not take into account individuals with physical or psychological impairments.

The British Council of Disabled People (1981) states that this distinction is embedded in social constructionism which states that these terms differ in that impairment exists in a realm beyond language within a complex organisation of shared meanings, discourses and limitations imposed by the environment at a particular time and place. The social model is a concept which recognises that some individuals have physical or

psychological differences which can affect their ability to function in society. However, the social model suggests that it is society that causes the individual with these physical or psychological differences to be disabled. In other words individuals with impairments are not disabled by their impairments but by the barriers that exist in society which do not take into account their needs. These barriers can be divided into three categories: environmental, economic and cultural, according to the British Council of Disabled People (1981).

2.2.1.1. Environmental barrier

The environment disables impaired people by not being accessible enough for them to move, function and communicate as effectively as people without impairments. A great deal of the environment is designed by non-impaired people, for non-impaired living. For example, people using wheelchairs are only 'disabled' if the environment is not designed for people with wheelchairs. A wheelchair-friendly building would probably include ramps, lifts, wide doorways and corridors and accessible fittings such as light switches, and motorised doors. Whilst these modifications benefit people who use wheelchairs they can also benefit non-impaired people.

2.2.1.2. Economic barrier

Society does not provide the same opportunities to people with impairments. This starts at school and continues throughout one's career. The Shaw Trust (2005) states that at school, lessons are designed for non-impaired people, using environments and teaching methods that are not suitable for some individuals with impairments such as sensory, cognitive and developmental disabilities.

2.2.1.3. Cultural barrier

Society lets impaired people down because of the prejudiced views and negative shared attitudes of the non-impaired community towards people with physical and psychological impairments. Swain, Finkelstein, French and Oliver (1993) also argue that prejudice is

associated with the recognition of difference, and “disabled” people are not seen as normal in the eyes of “non-disabled” people.

2.2.2. The medical model

Naidoo (2010) states that in this model, disabled people are defined by their illness or medical condition. They are disempowered as medical diagnoses are used to regulate and control access to social benefits, housing, education, leisure and employment. Naidoo (2010) further adds that the medical model promotes the view of a disabled person as dependent and needing to be cared for, and it justifies the way in which disabled people have been systematically excluded from society. In other words, the person is the problem, not society. Society has no underlying responsibility to make a place for persons with disabilities, since they live in an outsider role waiting to be cured, according to Kaplan (2000).

This model does not aid policy development, appropriate practice, sufficient awareness and positive attitudes required to successfully support and accommodate the diverse needs of students with physical challenges. The Open University (2006) also emphasises this model sometimes referred to as the individual model because it promotes the notion that it is the individual disabled person who must adapt to the way in which society is constructed and organised. As such, there would be no need to develop disability support structures at colleges in order to aid disabled students in their experience of college life. This way of looking at disability has contributed to ongoing discrimination and the marginalisation of people with physical disabilities, according to Naidoo (2010). According to the South African Human Rights Commission (in the Council on Higher Education, 2005), disability becomes something that is imposed by society when a person with an impairment is denied access to full economic and social participation.

2.2.3. The renewed social model

According to Shakespeare and Watson (2002), it is possible to challenge these processes without having to resort to equally crude determination of the social model. Disability should not be overlaid with negative cultural meanings. Neither should it be

reduced to an outcome of social barriers alone, however important these might be in people`s lives.

Naidoo (2010) stresses that it is critical that we recognise the ways in which impairment and disability work together. Crow (1996) further adds that the social model has never suggested that disability represents the total explanation of impairment or that impairment does not count. According to Crow (1996), impairment is about our bodies' ways of working and any implication that holds for our lives. Naidoo (2010) emphasises that disability, on the other hand, is about the reaction and impact of the outside world on our practical bodies. One cannot be fully understood without attention to the other, because whilst they can exist independently of each other, there are also circumstances where they interact. Removal of disability does not necessarily mean the removal of restricted opportunities. Impairment in itself can be a negative, painful experience.

The current interpretation of the social model tends to assume that if impairment ceases, then the individual will no longer experience disability. According to Crow (1996), the new renewed social model of disability broadens and strengthens the social model, taking it beyond grand theory and into real life, because it allows disabled people to incorporate a holistic understanding of their experience and potential for change. The current study had realised the significance of the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province and focused on this in order to bring about change to the lived experience of these students.

2.3. Psychosocial conceptualisation of disability

According to Naidoo (2010), psychosocially derived concepts such as stigma, prejudice and oppression also form part of the rich and meaningful conceptual toolbox that psychology delivers to the study of disability and impairment. In the light of the current study`s attention to the psychosocial experience of individuals with physical challenges, the work of Marks (1994) has been drawn on for the purposes of the definition.

Marks (1994) argues for the importance of developing a dynamic understanding of disability which recognises the significance of examining the interrelationship between embodied subjects, complex social and psychic relationships. Marks (1994) further argues that disability is not inherent in a particular body or environment, but rather is an embodied relationship. The body thus constitutes an entity that is bound up with innovative meanings and contexts in complex ways. Hughes and Paterson (1997) conceptualise impairment as the vantage point from which disabled people perceive the world and how the world reacts to them.

2.4. Theoretical framework

Based on the preceding discussion, the researcher thus based his theoretical framework on Bronfenbrenner's theory of bio-ecosystemic theory. Sincero (2012) indicates that human development is influenced by the different types of environmental systems formulated by Urie Bronfenbrenner. This theory helps us to understand why we may behave differently when we compare our behaviour in the presence of our family and our behaviour when we are in school or at work.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue convincingly that there should be a tight connection between one's theory, the methods that one uses, and one's analytical strategy. Bronfenbrenner explicates that the world of the child and indeed all of us consists of five systems of interaction.

- **Microsystem**

Sincero (2012) defines the microsystem as the direct environment we have in our lives. Your family, friends, classmates, teachers, neighbours and other people who have a direct contact with you are included in your microsystem. This theory covers the child's most immediate environment, according to Pipher (1996). As the child's most intimate learning setting, it can offer him or her a reference point of the world. Rogoff (2003) further emphasises that this theory may provide the nurturing centrepiece for the child or become a haunting set of memories of one's earliest encounters with violence. Pipher (1996) also adds that the real power in this initial set of interrelations with family for child-

ren is what they experience in terms of trust and mutuality with their significant people. The family of the physically challenged students should be the child's early microsystem for learning how to live. Caring relations between child and parents (and many other caregivers) can influence a healthy personality, according to Swick (2004). Lecturers' effort in the caring process must be to seek to understand the situations families are experiencing, inclusive of cultural, social, economic, and educational dynamics that are a part of their various systems, according to Powell (1988). Lecturers teaching physically challenged students at an FET College must be astute observers and willing to see physically challenged students in their milieu as they put on different lenses.

Payne (1996) also suggests that our understanding of families must be broad enough to include sensitivity to cultural forces that may be hidden beneath the surface of daily life activities. This should also be applicable to lecturers at an FET College for physically challenged students to be accommodated. We also need to be sensitive to the linguistic differences in our families and children, which might have created obstacles to the physically challenged students' full participation in the learning process at FET Colleges.

- **The exosystem**

Sincero (2012) defines the exosystem as the setting in which there is a link between the context where the person does not have any active role, and the context in which the person is actively participating.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) stresses that families must be assisted in becoming more empowered in their exosystem relations, e.g. lecturers can educate the parents of physically challenged students about what the children experience in their programme - thus increasing their comfort level with their activities at the college.

- **The mesosystem**

The real power of mesosystems is that they help to connect two or more systems in which child, parent, and family live, according to Bronfenbrenner (2005). Sincero (2012) also states that the mesosystem involves the relationships between the microsystems in one's life. This means that your family experience may be related to your school

experience. For example, if a child is neglected by his parents, he or she may have a low chance of developing a positive attitude towards his or her lecturers. Also this child may feel awkward in the presence of peers and may resort to withdrawal from a group of classmates. This has a negative impact on the education of physically challenged students since they feel that they are sometimes discriminated against. Pipher (1996) cautions that the community must become a concrete reality for young children and their parents. There must be loving adults beyond the parents who engage in caring ways with our children.

- **The macrosystem**

This is the actual culture of an individual, according to Sincero (2012). The cultural contexts involve the socioeconomic status of the person and/or his family, his ethnicity or race and living in a still developing or a third-world country. For example being born to a poor family makes a person work harder every day. This theory is helpful since most of the physically challenged students at FET Colleges are from a poor background. They always work harder to succeed academically.

Bronfenbrenner (2005) also indicates that the larger systems of cultural beliefs, societal values, political trends and “community happenings” act as a powerful source of energy in our lives. The macrosystems we live in influence what, how, when and where we carry out our relations. This view could assist physically challenged students at FET Colleges to be positive in life. The macrosystems that surround physically challenged students would help them to hold together the many threads of their lives. Without an umbrella of beliefs, it may be claimed that services and support for families, children and their parents are open to great harm and deterioration, according to Garbarino (1992).

- **The chronosystem**

Sincero (2012) states that the chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan. This may also involve the socio-historical contexts that may influence a person. One example of this is how divorce, as a major life transition, may affect not only the couple's relationship but also their children's behaviour. Physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province were more affected since they needed

assistance from both parents. Ford and Lerner (1992) add that the 'history' of relationships in families may explain more about parent-child relations than is evident in existing dynamics. Bronfenbrenner (2005) further adds that families should be helped to learn from their personal, family, and societal, historical lives. The FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province could engage families in practical assessments of how they could better use their local resources to empower the family. Thus, we could capitalise by offering parents education in various forms in order to assist their physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

2.5. History of disabilities in South Africa

Naidoo (2010) states that in South Africa, before 1994, the South African Education Department was divided into eighteen racially divided education departments. Each department had its own policy regarding learners with diverse educational needs and not all departments made provision for these learners. Disadvantaged communities were entirely marginalised. Special schools for learners with impairments such as hearing, visual, cognitive or physical impairments were established in the more advantaged education departments.

The move towards improving education for learners with physical disabilities became apparent when a democracy was established in 1994 and a progression of education transformation activities began. The Council on Higher Education (2005) further adds that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognises that people with disabilities have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability and that the establishment of equity for them requires redressing past inequity. In addition, the overall Policy Framework that informs equity of access and participation for students with disabilities in South African education draws on the fundamental principles of equity and non-discrimination to create a more just society that values and respects every member, as outlined in the Constitution (Council on Higher Education, 2005).

These values and principles are well established in various policy documents relevant to people with disabilities such as the Integrated National Disability Strategy (Office of the

Deputy President, 1997), the Education White Paper 3 on the transformation of the higher education system (Department of Education, 1997a), the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001a) and the National Plan for Higher Education (Department of Education, 2001b). Both the South African disability movement and the South African government approach physical disability from a social model. This model saw the position of people with physical challenges and discrimination they faced as a socially constructed phenomenon which was not related to the impairment of a person with disability. These policy documents firmly stated that institutions needed to accommodate students with diverse learning needs and removed barriers that hindered the development of all learners. As a result, adequate systems needed to be put in place to make certain that institutional and appropriate curriculum transformation occurs and support is provided.

Naidoo (2010) also argues that while legislation requires higher education institutions to include students with physical disabilities, on ground level appropriate practice is necessary to make sure that students in fact get the support and accommodation they need in order to participate equally.

Fuller, Healey, Bradley and Hall (2004) warn us against talking of students with disabilities as though they are a homogeneous group. Students with physical disabilities have diverse support needs. Fuller et al (2004) further argue that unless we recognise the difficulty in understanding disabled students' needs and display willingness and ability to accommodate these needs, it would be easy to think that legislation will itself create or has created a higher or further education environment that can accommodate the support needs of students with physical disabilities.

2.6. Disability within the context of higher education in South Africa

The Council on Higher Education (2005) also argues that very few investigations of higher education provision for people with disabilities have been carried out in South Africa. According to the Council on Higher Education (2005), there is a serious lack of reliable information on the nature and prevalence of disability in South Africa.

The Council on Higher Education (2005) further states that the lack of data on disability reveals the ineffective role that management information systems have had up to now, at different levels of both government departments and institutions that deal with disability. The Council on Higher Education (2005) further adds that people with disabilities were marginalised by the way the apartheid system and the government of the time understood and responded to disability. The Council on Higher Education (2005) also stresses the need to develop support mechanisms for academic staff and students with physical disabilities in order to facilitate teaching and learning.

2.7. Learner Support Services at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province

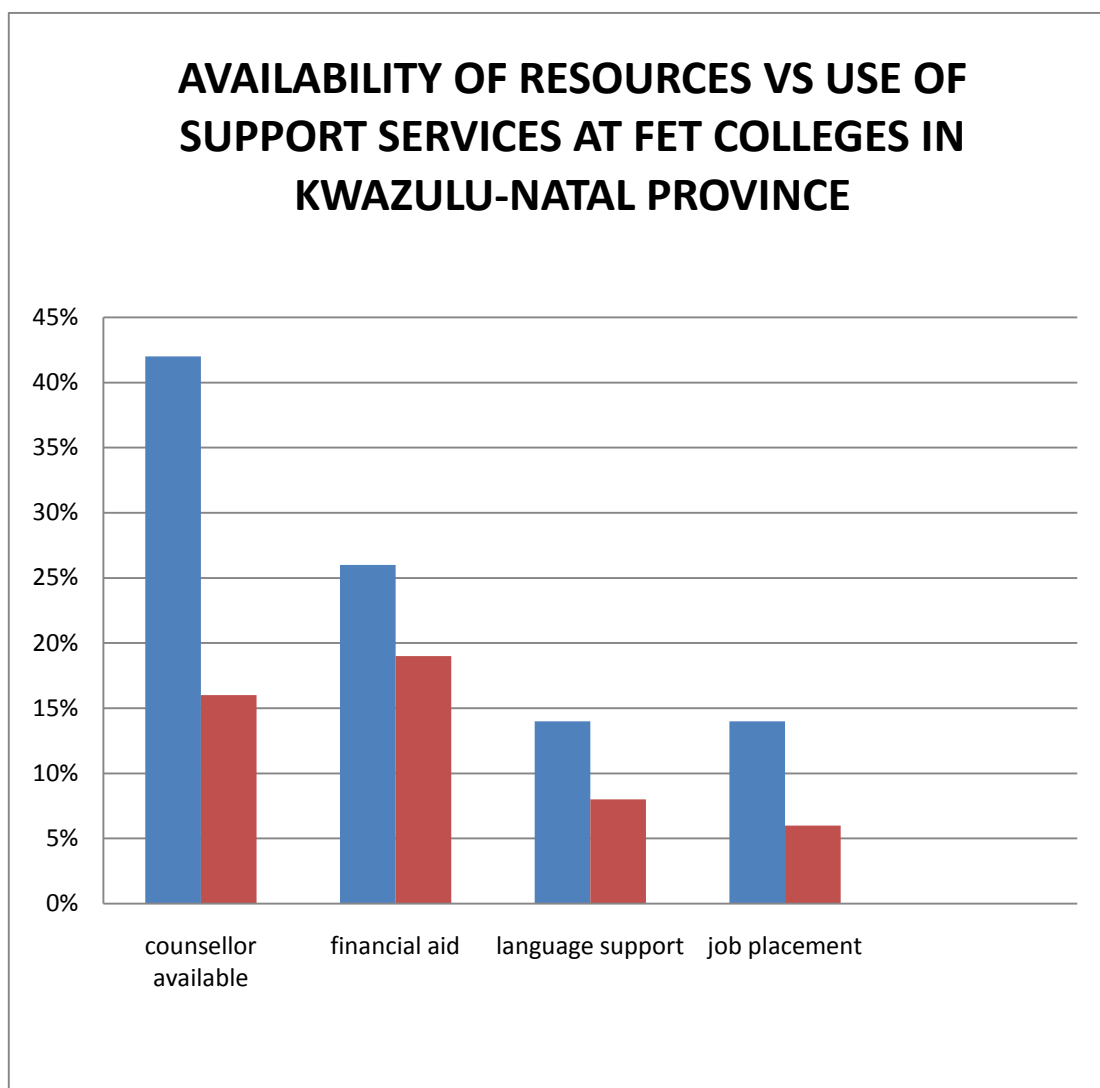
Gewer (2010) states that there is limited knowledge on the effectiveness of learner support services within FET Colleges. Data from a survey of NCV students in 2009 suggest that there are limited learner support services available. Gewer (2010) further states that such services are not being utilised by the students and lecturers. The college had tried to employ counsellors as indicated in Chapter one for each and every campus, but that was not enough since these people were not trained or qualified to counsel these students. The college still needed to workshop or train such people in order for them to be able to deal with physically challenged students. The department of higher education and training produced a framework which was for learner support in 2007, but it did not include physically challenged students, yet public FET Colleges were enrolling these students. This framework should precede any learner support planning which should also include physically challenged students.

According to Greyling (2008), divisions for student support services are crucial in providing individual support to students with disabilities. Greyling (2008) further adds that not only does an institution as a whole remain responsible for transformation, but all relevant role players are responsible for creating an inclusive environment of embracing differences, rather than just accepting or tolerating students with disabilities. Shevlin, Kenny and McNeela (2004) state that appropriate support systems are vital in ensuring equal access for students with disabilities in teaching and learning. For many students with disabilities, the Disability Support Service is the first point of contact. These units work to facilitate access and ensure participation in the college for students with physical

disability. Students with physical disabilities that will need support and alternative arrangements range from students with visual impairment to students with physical impairment. According to Dowrick, Anderson, Heyer and Acosta (2005), students with physical disabilities struggle with issues from attaining admission.

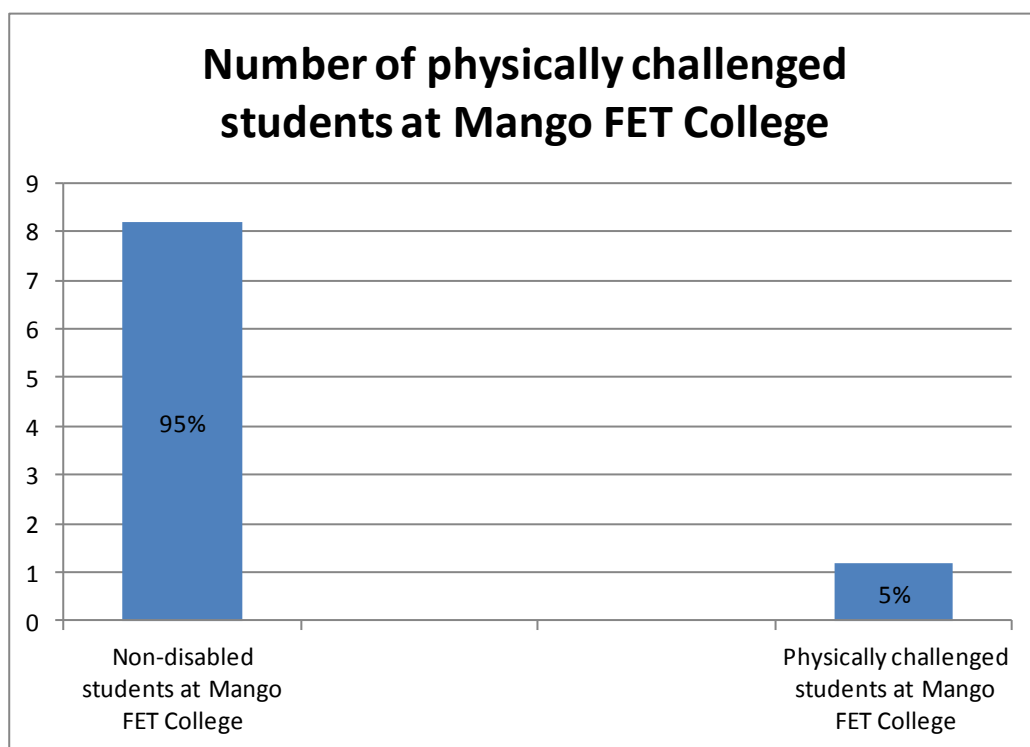
The above discussion is supported by Figure 1 below in mentioning that there was an availability of resources and support used. This support, however, did not benefit physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

FIGURE 1: Availability of resources vs. use of support services at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province



Source: Gewer, 2010

FIGURE 2: Number of physically challenged students at Mango FET College (2012)



SOURCE: COLTECH AT MANGO FET COLLEGE (2012)

2.8. Resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

When students have learning problems that impede their progress in the regular college setting, they need special services, assistance or learning progressions appropriate to their individual problems. In order to become employable, however, they need to acquire sufficient skill to compete in their chosen field. The design and delivery of a good training system requires vocational education training. The design and delivery of appropriate modifications to that system require special education training, according to Gewer (2010). As a result, these two disciplines must work together closely to provide quality vocational education. Integrating the expertise of special lecturers and vocational lecturers was the key to improving options for physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Kapp (1991) argues that physically challenged learners generally experience problems with mobility. Access to building and particular areas may cause problems. The researcher agreed with Kapp (1991) that access to college buildings at Mango FET

College was a problem for physically challenged students. Mango FET College was a triple storey building with no proper stairs for physically challenged students.

Macleod (1998) also mentions that specific learning needs put additional pressure on poor educational and social resources so that the entire context tends to get worse. Donald et al (1988) also argue that educators are not given in-service training regarding various handicaps, the availability of resources for learners and the explanation of the appropriate psychosocial needs of disabled learners in schools. Physically challenged students at Mango FET College experienced the same problem of not having for example toilets and ramps. This made it difficult for them to go to their classrooms.

2.9. Accessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) define mobility as an ability to move around. According to Donald et al (2002), disabilities usually have to do with different degrees of loss of function in the body or legs of the person concerned. Donald et al (2002) further add that this may range from the loss of a limb or limbs to conditions where the muscles are affected so that the person cannot adequately control body position or movement. Allen and Cowdery (2009) state that alterations may be needed in the classroom and play yard if students with physical disabilities are to have a safe and appropriate learning environment.

Donald et al (2002) further add that space to manoeuvre a wheelchair in and out of activities and to turn it around is essential. Ablution facilities must be clear so that a student can wheel in and out of the bathroom easily and pull up parallel to the toilet. Toilets should also be of appropriate size and height. Allen and Cowdery (2009) mention that handrails mounted on the wall are needed so a child can learn to swing from the wheelchair onto the toilet seat. Allen and Cowdery (2009) further add that ramps can be constructed to facilitate movement in and out of the building and the classroom. To promote independence, students must have appropriately sized furnishings and accessories. Hooks, washbasins, toilets and drinking facilities that can be reached and operated by students allow them to help themselves. Allen and Cowdery (2009) also

argue that with appropriate classroom adaptations, students can learn to take care of their own special needs.

2.10. In-service training for lecturers teaching physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

According to Papier (2008), college lecturers in the old dispensation were not required to have specific teaching qualifications. Their technical qualifications and years of experience were given equivalence for remuneration purposes, using pay-scales applicable to school-teachers. Where provincial departments of education made it a requirement for lecturers to obtain a teaching qualification, a few higher education institutions offered diploma programmes which have since become outdated. Papier (2008) further adds that the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) show that these institutions have in the absence of national vocational teacher training programmes been offering adapted versions of school-teacher preparation programmes.

Many lecturers with academic subjects like Language, Mathematics or Science entered colleges with school teaching qualifications but little industry experience. Since the skills legislation of 1998 where colleges offer sector specific training, lecturers have also been acquiring assessor, facilitator and moderator training or qualifications offered by private providers. Prior to the new suite of teacher qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework, some higher education institutions offered diploma courses to FET College lecturers, but these largely fell away once new qualifications were designed in accordance with the Norms and Standards Documents of 1998 and 2000. Since then, college lecturers have either undertaken qualifications intended for school teachers, or some universities and universities of technology have adapted their teacher qualifications to the more vocational context of FET Colleges. By and large there is little uniformity in how teachers for the college sector are prepared, according to Papier (2008).

According to Garza (2011), the national ministry of education is currently designing a framework of recognised qualifications for teachers in FET Colleges, which will usher in a new era of curriculum development for those higher institutions that wish to offer them. The Department of Education (2004) has engaged in research on human resource needs in the FET College sector. There has not been a coherent strategy for addressing the development of college personnel and such quantitative data as do exist in HRD reviews are still based on statistics dating back to 2002. This is supported by the Department of Education (2009), when stating that the lack of strong system-wide data for more than the recent period is itself a finding of this review chapter.

A research project done by a Danish-South African team (2008) investigated identifiable training programmes in public higher education institutions for FET College lecturers and showed that there is a growing awareness of the need for such programmes, but also for guidance with regard to appropriate offerings. The imperative to train teachers for schools and the successive policy changes that have affected the school sector, have compelled teacher training institutions to focus heavily on the needs of schools, while FET Colleges have remained in the background, something of an unknown quantity in many higher education faculties. From the investigation done to date by Papier (2008), it appears that education faculties have in the main offered to college lecturers an adapted version of the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) qualification intended for the upgrading of school teachers. While universities have made attempts to accommodate the college context, this is often not immediately overt except perhaps in the case of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) where FET policy and global issues appear clearly in the course outline.

Maja and McGrath (2003) stress that there is too little provision of in-service training for employees, or other initiatives such as sharing of facilities and staff. However, it is clear that colleges are not the only actors in building such quality relationships, and employers also need to be proactive. Mango FET College is also struggling to address other issues about quality. The nature and quality of staff are rising; new pedagogical and curricular requirements are placing major new demands on lecturers. McDavis et al (1982) emphasise that teachers are not given in-service training regarding various handicaps,

the availability of resources and the explanation of the appropriate psychosocial needs of physically challenged students.

Macleod (1998) also adds that the specific learning needs of physically disabled students in a disadvantaged social context are likely to be made worse by inadequate resources.

2.11. Lecturer qualifications at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province

ECSECC JIPSA (2006) cites that a recent audit of the FET Colleges in the Eastern Cape found that only 38% of educators are confident in their abilities to fully impart practical skills to learners and 34% were in urgent need of a practical up-skilling intervention. Young (2006) prefers a model that sees professional development as a joint responsibility of colleges and universities in a partnership that addresses the issue of a specialist vocational pedagogy and curriculum knowledge. The formal offering of programmes for college-based lecturers is limited at present. The research by Young (2006) indicates that nothing is as yet being done to cater for physically challenged students and how they should be taught at FET Colleges. It is little surprise to find that there is practically no professional literature on technical and vocational education. As a result there is a risk that FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province will lose their connection to the world of work through the increasing focus on education over work-based qualifications, according to Mugabe (2011).

2.12. Curriculum at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province

Mugabe (2011) mentions that there is widespread concern that the National Certificate Vocational programme (NCV) is not flexible enough to cater for the traditional college students. The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) at level 2, 3 and 4 of the National Qualification Programme (NQF) was introduced in 2007 to solve the problem of poor quality and low relevance of Nated programmes and the short supply of work placements available to private students. The researcher also agrees with Mugabe (2011), that physically challenged students at FET Colleges do not have a curriculum which was designed for them. In 2005 the South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO 2005) issued a statement to the effect that a three-year full-time programmes does not take seriously the urgency with which the country needs to deal with its skills crisis.

Mugabe (2011) further adds that the National Skills Development Strategies (NSDS) require FET Colleges to address skills shortages by offering relevant, effective and efficient education and training as a matter of urgency. The Department of Labour (2005) defines the National Skills Development Strategy as means of transforming education and training in South Africa. Its objective is to develop a culture of high quality lifelong learning. The researcher felt that addressing the skills shortage was not enough since it did not address how the physically challenged students would benefit. The then Minister of Education in South Africa, Dr Naledi Pandor (2006), introduced the FET Colleges Bill in the National Council of Provinces in October 2006 by indicating that the FET Curriculum had been redesigned to offer high-level skills to students from the age of 16 to mature adults. The Minister did not include or mentioned anything about physically challenged students, yet such students were enrolled at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Pandor (2006) stated that to fulfil the ideal of providing lifelong learning, colleges had to be different institutions from the FET schools. The researcher agreed with the then Minister of Education that colleges should be different institutions from FET schools. The colleges should have adequate resources for physically challenged students.

2.13. Main agencies influencing vocational education and training

Mugabe (2011) explains that among government instruments to promote education was the Skill Development Act (SDA) promulgated in 1998 to develop the skills of the South African workforce. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is responsible for promoting quality training and education and maintaining the National Qualifications Framework. These functions are carried out by SAQA's main arms of Standards Setting and Quality Assurance. Key bodies within these arms are the Sector Education and Training Authorities responsible for ensuring the achievement of the skills and training objectives within their industry/sector as set out in the National Skills Development Strategy; and UMALUSI (the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training), responsible for accrediting and regulating education and training providers. Both the Department of Education and the Department of Labour set

policy regarding vocational training. Much had been said about the training of lecturers at FET Colleges, but there was still a gap when it came to training them to teach physically challenged students. The present research emphasised that even SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority) which is responsible for promoting quality training and education did not indicate how physically challenged students should be taught and how lecturers at Mango FET College should be trained to teach such students.

According to Ofsted (2003), the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) of South Africa seeks to radically transform education and training in South Africa. This means that transformation will be to improve the quality and quantity of training to support increased competitiveness of industry and improved quality of life for all South Africans. It was still not clear whether these physically challenged students at Mango FET College would benefit at all since there was no obvious improved quality of life for them.

Papier (2008) explains that the imperative to train teachers for schools and the successive policy changes that have affected the school sector have compelled teacher training institutions to focus heavily on the needs of schools while FET Colleges have remained in the background, something of an unknown quantity in many higher education faculties. The researcher agreed with Papier (2008) that there was nothing that was in place for lecturers teaching at FET Colleges, let alone catering for physically challenged students at FET Colleges.

Ofsted (2003) emphasises that the quality of training provided to FET lecturers comes under scrutiny and voices concern about the lack of pedagogical support for lecturers in their specialist vocational subjects and the fact that they need guidance in how to teach these physically challenged students. The researcher also agreed that there was a problem when it came to pedagogical support for lecturers in FET Colleges in spite of a concentrated focus on raising the qualification levels of FET lecturers. Lecturers at FET colleges should have been trained to also teach physically challenged students as they were public colleges.

2.14. Roles of parents in the education of their physically challenged children at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province and the meaning of physical disabilities for parents

Allen and Cowdery (2009) stress that parents and teachers are partners in the business of children's learning. They bear the ongoing and primary responsibility during the long years of a child's growth and development. Numerous studies according to Allen and Cowdery (2009) describe the benefits of active parent involvement in a child's early intervention programme. This means that without parental involvement, children tend to regress once the programme has ended. Parental involvement has two functions. Firstly it provides an ongoing reinforcement system that supports the efforts of the programme while it is underway and secondly it tends to maintain and extend the child's gains after the programme ends.

Janko (1994) mentions that adequate support systems are a key factor in ensuring the well-being of families with children with developmental disabilities. Support is often taken for granted when a family has a regular income, comprehensive health insurance, adequate housing and caring family and friends. Even so, additional support is usually required in the form of organising workshops for parents. Parents of students with physical disabilities are often faced with disappointments and adjustments, according to Allen and Cowdery (2009).

Parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College were not fully involved in the education of their children. Some parents complained about having no money to come to the college; this was supported by Kapp (1991) who asserted parents including legal guardians should be encouraged to participate as equal partners in the education of their children. This should also happen at FET Colleges since there are students who are minors. However, parents of these children also often had distinct and significant reasons to be involved at the Mango FET College. If these parents came to the college, they could well have brought specific and valuable knowledge of their child's development.

Allen and Cowdery (2009) stress that regular parent conferences or meetings should be scheduled two or three times a year. It was not the case at Mango FET College, since most parents did not attend meetings organised by the college management team. The college organised two parents meeting yearly according to college statistics (2012). The

researcher thought that it was important for parents to attend since these meetings would have provided opportunities for parents to see their children's work, interacted with lecturers and compared notes with other parents. Parent support groups for physically challenged students had individual concerns and needed information regarding their child, services and community resources.

In terms of the meaning of physical disabilities for parents, Ahmad (2000) argues that chronic and disabling conditions have an important impact on personal biography and identity. Consequently, developing and sustaining a positive disabled identity is far from straightforward. Ahmed (2000) further adds that in the first instance, parents' response to Impairment affected the young persons' views about being disabled. Beresford (1994) states that many parents expressed feelings of guilt, frustration, anxiety, helplessness, isolation, notions of unfairness and resentment: common themes in the mainstream literature on family caring. Allen and Cowdery (2009) also state that many parents viewed the birth of a disabled child as a catastrophe, difficult to comprehend as well as threatening in terms of its consequences for the child and parents.

Riddell and Watson (2003) argue that parents believed that disability made their children socially and morally more vulnerable, and limited their life chances. Parental concerns focused on issues such as the ability to successfully negotiate transitions they deemed 'normal' for non-disabled children: a good education; social skills; knowledge of parental religions and cultures; and assuming adult roles such as having a job and being married. Parents felt that their child's impairment presented additional barriers. Riddell and Watson (2003) further emphasise that there is thus a constant tension in the parents' narratives as they try to make sense of their own sadness at having a disabled child, while at the same time wanting to ensure the best opportunities for their child.

2.15. Conclusion to literature review

Many students with physical challenges still needed an advocate for basic forms of assistance. Negative attitudes, communication and information problems, physical barriers and inadequate resources were still major barriers to success for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Even though

noteworthy progress had been made to increase the throughput rate of physically challenged students at Further Education and Training Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province, there was still much to be done as many physically challenged students faced discrimination and difficulty in acquiring and receiving support. Further progress could be made through the increased coordination of disability support services and programmes to educate the lecturers, peers and future employers about support, forms of assistance and the rights of individuals with physical challenges. In this chapter, the researcher presented the following: an introduction, background information about the literature review, theoretical framework, learner support services at FET Colleges, resources for physically challenged students, accessibility of buildings at FET Colleges, in-service training for lecturers which included subheadings such as lecturer qualifications at FET Colleges, curriculum at FET Colleges and main agencies influencing vocational training and education, the roles of parents in the education of their physically challenged students at Mango FET College and the meaning of physical disabilities for parents and conclusion. The next chapter is about the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

Research design is different from the method by which data are collected. According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), the purpose of the research study as well as the paradigm of the research study, the methodology and the context in which the study takes place should be cohesive. The research design is, thus, the framework of how the researcher intends to carry out the research study. It serves as the connection between the research question and the implementation of the research. The purpose of the present study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The type of research question, therefore, required that this study followed an interpretive paradigm within a qualitative research methodology framework, since the reality to be studied consisted of participants' subjective experience of the external world (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). The researcher that works from the interpretive paradigm prefers to use personal and interactive means and methods to gather data (Mertens, 1998). According to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), paradigms act as perspectives that provide a rationale for the research, and commit the researcher to particular methods of data collection, observation and interpretation. Moreover, paradigms represent the epistemological, the ontological and the methodological premises of the researcher (Neuman, 2000). A fundamental assumption of the interpretive paradigm is that subjective experience constitutes reality. This research explored the subjective experiences of the physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The aim was to discover the many perspectives of the participants from the point of view of their unique experiences. Epistemology within an interpretive paradigm refers to a concern with exploring and understanding the social world using both the participants' and the researcher's understandings (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003); it warrants a consideration of the role of the researcher within the research process. The researcher was therefore involved in an interactive meaning-making process with participants, each influencing the other. In the present research study the researcher was concerned with the different ways in which physically challenged students subjectively constructed their experiences of support for their development and needs. In the present research study the qualitative method of semi-structured interviews was used to capture the many meanings of participants. The research goal of this study was to understand how physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province constructed their own meanings of the experiences they had within the context of the college.

3.2. Research methodology

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the qualitative research method implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. A qualitative method was used because the purpose of this study was to describe, explain, explore and interpret the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College. The method used by qualitative researchers represents a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon under investigation (Silverman, 2000). The unique qualities of qualitative research, which were appropriately applied in the current research study, include: a concern with the meaning that people construct from their world and their experiences. Additionally, qualitative research involves fieldwork, which means that the researcher must go to the setting or institution to observe behaviour, experiences, and perspectives in their natural setting (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research findings are typically in the form of themes and categories; they focus on process, meaning, and understanding and the product of qualitative research, according to Merriam (1998).

Miles and Huberman (1994) add that qualitative research involves small samples of people, studied by means of in-depth methods. The researcher used qualitative research because small samples of people were used in the study. Cresswell (2003) also states that a qualitative method is undertaken with the aim to explore, discover, develop an understanding, describe and report on the study. The researcher was therefore able to discover and explore why physically challenged students did not have adequate resources and accessible buildings at Mango FET College. The unique qualities of qualitative research, which were appropriately applied in the current research study, include: a concern with the meaning that people construct from their world and their experiences (Merriam, 2002).

Qualitative research findings are typically in the form of themes and categories; they focus on process, meaning, understanding and the product of qualitative research, according to Merriam (2002). The concept paradigm refers to the way we observe, think and understand the world and draw conclusions about the phenomena. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), a paradigm is a model or framework for observation and understanding, which shapes both what we see and how we understand and attempt to draw meaning from it. A paradigm can open up a new understanding about the nature of the world and theorising about the phenomena being studied. According to Rensberg (2005), the researcher should clearly understand the philosophical frameworks that guide the research activities, before making a choice of paradigm. Silverman (2000) further adds that the methods used by qualitative researchers represent a common belief that they can provide a deeper understanding of the social phenomenon under investigation. A qualitative research methodology was therefore chosen for this study so as to allow the researcher to interact directly with physically challenged students and lecturers. Through the use of interviews the researcher was able to enter the world of the physically challenged students and lecturers. The researcher was also able to attain an insider perception of the meanings and experiences of the participants.

Rensberg (2005) further explains that the interpretative researcher constructs meaning from the data by seeing the bigger picture and by translating the raw empirical data into what is known as thick description. The method was suitable for the study because the researcher dealt with relatively small number of participants who shed light on the factors affecting the development of the physically challenged students under investigation. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 143) emphasise that “qualitative research ends with tentative answers about what was observed”. The study also ended with tentative answers as students were giving information based on the research questions. The researcher collected an extensive amount of verbal data from a small number of participants, organized the data that gave him coherence and used verbal descriptions to portray the situation being studied. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed in order to generate themes and categories rich in meaning.

3.2.1. Selection of participants

Merriam (1998) explains that purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon and must, therefore, purposefully select participants who are rich in information regarding that phenomenon. Therefore, participants included should be knowledgeable, willing to participate, and readily available (Greyling, 2008). According to Naidoo (2010), qualitative researchers usually work with small groups of participants. The individuals who are included in the group of participants should provide in-depth knowledge of and insight into the phenomenon being studied. Purposive sampling was used in the present research study. Polit and Hungler (1999) define purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) mention that qualitative researchers are intentionally non-random in their selection of data sources. Marshall (1996) also emphasises that the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question.

Purposeful sampling of six students and four lecturers was used. Furthermore, purposive sampling takes place when the group of participants is homogeneous, sharing the experience of a particular situation (Willing, 2001). The researcher selected students and lecturers that yielded the most information about the topic under investigation, e.g. the researcher took physically challenged students and lecturers since they were the ones that were affected at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Three male students and three female students were selected because they were regarded as being representative of the physically challenged students at Mango FET College. Two female and two male lecturers were also selected. Equal numbers of students and lecturers were selected in order to avoid discrimination and nepotism amongst participants. With reference to the present research study, although the participants formed a homogeneous group in terms of the context and label of challenges they share at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province, they were individuals with unique experiences, perspectives and voice. As such, students with physical challenges selected, represented the broader population of students with physical challenges at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) further mention that purposive sampling is the most common type of non-probability sampling and researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and previous research findings to deliberately obtain analyses in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. Welman et al (2005) are correct because in this study the researcher used his experience over three years as a senior lecturer who taught these physically challenged students.

The researcher also regarded the sample as representative of all physically challenged students and lecturers at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province, e.g. the researcher only asked six physically challenged students and four lecturers some questions concerning the research questions. Appointments to conduct the semi-structured interviews were then set up with these students and a convenient venue was booked to conduct the interviews. Their answers represented the whole population of physically challenged students and lecturers at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

TABLE 1: Profile of participants (physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province)

Description of participants	Number to be sampled
1.Student one (female)	Six students were used as samples.
2.Student two (female)	
3.Student three (female)	
4.Student four (male)	
5.Student five (male)	
6.Student six (male)	

TABLE 2: Profile of participants (lecturers teaching physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province)

Description of participants	Number to be sampled
1.Lecturer A (female)	Four lecturers were used as samples.
2.Lecturer B (female)	
3.Lecturer C (male)	
4.Lecturer D (male)	

Purposeful sampling of six physically challenged students and four lecturers as participants was used. A sample of six physically challenged students and four lecturers was appropriate for this study because according to the college technology system (2012) at Mango FET College, 5% of these students (physically challenged students) were affected. According to Kapp (1991), these students generally experience problems with mobility. Access to buildings and particular areas caused problems for them. The researcher understood that where there was no special provision made, certain buildings and areas remained inaccessible to physically challenged students at Mango FET

College as a whole. Baumberger and Harper (2007), as indicated in Chapter one, mention that students with disabilities often need assistance in acquiring skills for independent living. The researcher selected these students and lecturers because they yielded the most information about the topic under investigation, e.g. the researcher selected six physically challenged students and four lecturers simply because they were the ones that were affected at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Three male students who were physically challenged and three females who were physically challenged and four lecturers were selected because they were regarded as being representative of the physically challenged students and lecturers at FET Colleges. Participants were selected randomly in order to avoid discrimination and nepotism as indicated in Chapter three (Table 1 and Table 2).

3.3. Method of data analysis

Within a qualitative framework, data analysis begins by bringing together and organising all the information about the case at hand, for example in the interview transcripts (Patton, 2002). Data analysis involves the process of transforming data to answer the initial research question, according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999). Data analysis is the systematic search for meaning; it is the process that involves making sense of data (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher's focus thereafter will be on interpreting and understanding the social world of the participants. The aim of analysis is to understand the various elements of the data and to identify patterns or themes (Mouton, 2001). The method of data analysis chosen for the research study was through an interpretive paradigm.

3.3.1. Interpretive paradigm

The interpretive paradigm seeks to understand the meanings that people give to their own social interactions. Winberg (1997) also argues that it exposes how individual and group interpretation of reality influences both intentions and actions. Rensberg (2005) asserts that humans can understand the world as it appears to them and as such the

research knowledge is constructed in the minds of the people who are active in the research process. In understanding the phenomena under scrutiny therefore, the researcher interacted with the participants, listened, cooperated and shared the experience. The researcher involved participants who were in line with the study that required the researcher to be actively involved in the social context of the participants. Maxwell (2005: 35) argues that “qualitative research helps to understand the meanings for particular events, situations, experiences and actions of participants”.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) also mention that in understanding human actions therefore, the researcher should conduct an action research in a specific environment of the phenomena and uncover the reality on the ground. Hence, interpretative qualitative research helps in understanding in-depth, participants’ cultural norms, values, experiences and perceptions within their social context. The interest of this study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. According to Willing (2001), the interpretative method aims to explore the research participant’s experience from his or her perspective, it recognises that such an exploration must necessarily implicate the researcher’s own view of the world, as well as the nature of the interaction between the researcher and participant.

3.4. Data collection

Data collection is the technique employed in research, to gather information about the phenomena under study and acquire meaningful understanding in accordance with research question. Merriam (2002) defines the concept “data” as bits and pieces of information found in the environment that are collected in systematic ways to provide an evident base from which to make interpretations and statements intended to advance knowledge and understanding concerning a research question or problem. Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 143) state that “qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data techniques that suit well with the research questions”. In this study the researcher used observations and interviews as the main tools for data collection.

Patton (2002) argues that studies that use only one method are more vulnerable to errors than studies that use several methods in which different types of data provide cross-data validity checks. Different types of data provide an opportunity for triangulation and ensure validity. The data that were collected during the study were qualitative. According to Cresswell (2003: 182) “qualitative research data is (sic) fundamentally interpretative”.

3.4.1. Observation

Atkinson and Hammersley (in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) define observation as a systematic data collection approach. According to Fetterman (1998), participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people being studied with maintenance of a professional distance that allows adequate observation and recording of data. Observation was appropriate for this study because the researcher recorded participants' observations. In participation observation, the researcher observed the interactions of the participants involved as detached outsiders but experienced them first hand as insiders. The researcher became a member of the inner circle of the event that was being studied. Maxwell (2005: 36) also argues that “observation can enable you to draw inferences about the perspectives that you could not obtain by relying exclusively on interview data. It is of particular importance to get a tacit understanding and theory in-use as well as aspects of the participants' perspectives that they are reluctant to directly mention in an interview”. The observation took place in the afternoon because physically challenged students were writing the November 2012 examinations and lecturers were invigilating. The researcher wrote notes in the journal. In observing the participants' behaviours, interactions and level of participation, it was useful to understand the context of the phenomenon under study and the researcher managed to ask more relevant questions on the research topic.

The researcher's observations were focused on the following areas:

- Learner support services at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

- Availability of resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
- Accessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
- Provision of in-service training for lecturers teaching physically challenged students in terms of lecturer qualifications and curriculum at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The researcher kept a record of the data for validation purposes.

3.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

The subject of the qualitative research interview, thus, is the life-world of the interviewee and his or her relation to it (Kvale, 1983). According to Kvale (1996), the purpose of the qualitative research is depicted as the description and interpretation of themes in the subjects' lived world. The semi-structured interview was chosen for the current research study and was conducted by making use of an interview guide that was developed before the scheduled interviews. The semi-structured interview guide provided a framework to make sure that all the relevant topics regarding the research study's focus were covered during the interview session (Patton, 2002), but also allowed for greater flexibility in exploring certain topic areas in more depth as they rose. The topics were based on the effectiveness of the college in providing for students' academic needs in terms of its support structures, services, and facilities, as well as their advantages and disadvantages. The outline of the interview guide, according to Patton (2002), increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes the data systematic for each participant. Logical gaps can be anticipated and can then be covered.

Kvale (1983) reports that the qualitative research interview seeks to describe and understand the meaning of central themes in the life-world of the interviewee; it also aims to obtain as many nuanced descriptions of the different qualitative aspects of the interviewee's life-world as possible. Patton (2002) points out that some weaknesses of the interview guide approach include the fact that important and significant topics may be

missed, as well as that the flexibility of the interviewer in the sequencing of questions can result in substantially different responses from different perspectives, thus reducing the comparability of responses. All semi-structured interviews were approximately thirty minutes in length, were tape-recorded with the permission of the participants, and were later transcribed verbatim in order to capture the verbal data for use during later data analysis.

3.5. Standards of quality and verification

According to Cresswell, (1998), qualitative researchers strive for understanding of a deep structure of knowledge that comes from visiting personally with participants, spending extensive time in the field, and probing to find detailed meaning. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in Cresswell (1998), in order to establish the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher should use the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as naturalist equivalents for internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity. In order to operationalise these new terms, they propose techniques such as prolonged engagement in the field and triangulation of data from different sources, methods, and investigators to establish credibility. To make sure that the findings are transferable between the researcher and those being studied, thick description is necessary.

The naturalistic researcher looks to confirmability rather than objectivity in establishing the value of the data, according to Naidoo (2010). Both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process. In terms of the current research study's transferability, the context, design, and selection of participants have been made clear to the reader. Moreover, the selection of diverse participants as well as the rich in-depth descriptions of the findings contributes to the transferability of the present research study.

According to Mertens (1998), in order to enhance the dependability of a qualitative study, the researcher must use clearly defined guidelines for data collection and data analysis. This allows for a clear track of evidence during data collection and data analysis to

enable any individual to evaluate the quality described in detail in order to show the process of data transformation and to leave a trail of evidence per se.

3.6. Limitation

There was one constraint the researcher experienced. The study was restricted to afternoon only, as during the morning, physically challenged students at the college were writing their November 2012 examinations and lecturers were invigilating. The study was conducted at one FET College and only six students and four lecturers were involved as participants, so the findings could not be generalised.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Terre Blanche and Durrhan (1999) emphasise the need to consider the following ethical considerations: informed consent, voluntary participation, accurate information, and confidentiality. A research proposal was submitted to the University of South Africa (UNISA) and to the relevant committees at the college, i.e. the Rector of Mango FET College, the chairman of the council at Mango FET College, and the Department of Higher Education and Training in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Consent was obtained from the department of higher education and training in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Rector of the College. Consent forms, together with an information letter were given to physically challenged students. In the present research study, individuals who agreed to participate in the study were informed about the nature of the research study as well as the research procedure. Participants were also informed that their participation in the study would be voluntary, i.e. they were free to choose whether they wanted to participate or to withdraw, and that choosing to withdraw would not result in any adverse impact or penalty. All reasonable efforts were applied in the research process.

The anonymity of the institution and all participants was protected. Participants' details were not made known to ensure confidentiality. Participants were told that they would

receive feedback on research results upon the completion of the study and data would be stored safely for a period of two years.

3.8. Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented a discussion of the research design, research methodology, method of data analysis, data collection, standards of quality and verification, limitation, ethical issues that related to the study, and conclusion. The next chapter is about the data analysis and interpretation of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4. Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The aim of this study was to answer the following question: what are the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province?

The researcher used interviews and observations to provide a holistic understanding of the issue. The researcher identified four master themes through a data analysis process regarding the factors affecting the academic development of physically challenged students, namely the lack of support from student support services and the college, the lack of resources, inaccessibility of buildings and inadequate support from parents. In order to make clear to the reader what these master themes entailed as well as to explore and describe the phenomenon under investigation, these master themes were discussed in detail in the preceding section. The participants (physically challenged students) in this study were referred to as participant 1 to participant 6 and the other participants (lecturers teaching physically challenged students) in this study were participants A to D.

4.1. Master themes

4.1.1. The factors affecting the academic development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

The factors that the researcher found to be affecting the development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College were: lack of support from Student Support Services and from the College, the lack of resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College and inadequate support from their parents. All these factors contributed to making it difficult for physically challenged students to progress academically at Mango FET College.

4.1.1.1 The lack of support from Student Support Services and from the College

Participant 1: ... *student support services do not have even first aid kits and if we are sick due to our disabilities, we are referred to the hospital which is about 10 km from the college and that makes us stay behind when it comes to our education since other students normally continue with their studies. In other words, physically challenged students at Mango FET College do not have proper access to counselling facilities and the problem is that even some of us do not talk about our disabilities. This is very painful. Student support services should be trained by the college in order to meet physically challenged students` needs.*

Participant 2: ... *the support is really lacking here. We need disability support services. We only have one person... who is both student support services and sometimes become a social worker. If you ask her about academic matters, she will tell you about counselling.*

Participant 4: *The College needs to employ more students' councillors since there is only one at the campus and she is focusing more on students that are not physically challenged. That is too bad for us as physically challenged students. We also need therapists that will be able to assist us in order to achieve our dreams. And lastly, in reality we do not receive any support from lecturers, student support services and the college as a whole.*

Participant 5: *Sometimes we feel inferior and discriminated at the college because of this lack of support.*

Participant A: ... *we have a lady that is working with student support services, but we do not even know her job description. Another thing is that there is no good working relationship between us and student support services. Let alone the manner they are selected to be in a student support services. They only elect lecturers that are not even qualified to be in the student support services. That is very disturbing.*

Participant B: *There is a lack of support from student support services and from the college. There is no procedure when it comes to counselling students. We do not even know the procedure for hiring counsellors at the college. Let me give you an example, last year I had a student in my class that really needed counselling. I referred the student*

to the counsellor at the campus and the student came back telling me that she should have taken the matter to the campus manager before approaching her. And I think that was uncalled for.

Participant C: ... the college is not doing what it is supposed to do in terms of supporting physically challenged students. There is a lack of support from both sides; the student support services and the college. The college should employ counsellors that are trained to deal with physically challenged students. As lecturers, we are not receiving adequate training when it comes to teaching physically challenged students.

Participant D: ... there is a lack of support from the college and student support services. The college should train lecturers and student support services and make sure that they work hand in hand with student representative council of the college. I repeat, qualified counsellors should be employed and disability support services should be established in order to cater for physically challenged students at this college.

All these participants (A-D and 1, 2, 4 and 5) indicated that there was a lack of support at the college. This would also have a negative impact on the academic success of physically challenged students. Participants also reported that they were not trained to teach physically challenged students and this made things difficult for physically challenged students at Mango FET College. All the stakeholders such as lecturers, student support services, counsellors, the student representative council and the college should have played a major role in assisting physically challenged students. Adequate support was needed in order for physically challenged students to cope academically.

This lack of support actually meant that physically challenged students at Mango FET College did not have lecturers that were qualified to teach them. The student support services were not also trained to counsel them. Disability Support Services should be available for physically challenged students at Mango FET College. The above participants were talking about in-service training of lecturers in as far as physical disabilities were concerned. This would also have a negative impact on their (the physically challenged students) academic success.

Participant 2 voiced her concern that as physically challenged students, they needed disability support services and the lack of support could have harmful effects on the

emotional state of physically challenged students. With regard to the lack of support from student support services and from the college, the findings showed that this lack of support had a huge impact on the academic life of physically challenged students at Mango FET College. All the participants raised the issue of the lack of support from students support services and from the college.

They also mentioned that they had student support services, but they did not provide them with the necessary support they would have liked to have. They also reported that this inadequate support had affected their academic development.

One participant stated that this lack of support means that the student support services, together with the college should play roles in order to try and meet the needs of physically challenged students. As reported by participant 3, the college did not train lecturers about physical disabilities and the lecturers sometimes treated them like normal students. This would have a negative impact on their academic development at the college.

4.1.1.2. The lack of resources

Participant 1: *We still have problems when it comes to moving around, simple because the college does not have ramps for us. The toilet facilities are in a bad situation. The truth is that we really do not have toilet facilities for us as physically challenged students. Students support services do not receive resources from the college. They do not even have an office.*

Participant 2: *... very hard to study without proper resources. This is just a shame. We sometimes do not know who to blame when it comes to providing resources to us as physically challenged students at the college.*

Participant 3: *There are no ramps at all. We are struggling to move around using stairs. The college promised us that by end of last year (2011), we will have buildings with ramps, but nothing is happening. This is frustrating us since it affects our studies at the college.*

Participant 4: ... if we ask lecturers about the shortage of resources, they tell us that they are still waiting for the college management to address the issue of resources. It is taking long since nothing is happening at the moment.

Participant 5: The College as a whole does not accommodate us as physically challenged students in terms of resources. We struggle from moving around since the college does not have proper facilities for wheelchairs. Our play grounds are only designed for those that are non-physically challenged. The college, at least should have ramps instead of stairs in order for us to be accommodated. All lecturers should be trained about physical disabilities and how they should assist physically challenged students at the college.

Participant 6: We still have not ramps as we regard them as resources since they make things easier for us to move around. The college should build ramps for us in order to cope academically.

Participant A: I arrived here in 2007 as a lecturer for life orientation. We have been struggling to receive assistance in as far as resources are concerned. Some of the lecturers decided to resign due to the shortage of resources. These physically challenged students are not properly accommodated in as far as receiving of resources is concerned.

Participant B: Resources alone are not going to help. Lecturers teaching these physically challenged students need to be thoroughly trained in order to meet these students 'needs.

Participant D: ...the college does not provide us with adequate resources for teaching physically challenged students, but they enrol these students knowing very well that there are no resources. This becomes difficult to teach them. May be the department of higher education will assist us since it is going to absorb us.

Participant C: ... we have tried to get support in as far as resources are concerned. The college management even promised us as lecturers that the shortage of resources will be sorted out. It is an honest truth that nothing has happened up until now. It is just a crisis.

All participants in this study reported on the lack of resources at Mango FET College as well as the effects this had on their academic development. The lack of resources coupled with the lack of support made it even more difficult for students with physical challenges to cope academically. The lack of resources meant that the college did not have the necessary equipment to cope with physically challenged students. Participants also reported on the limited number of toilets available for them. Participants argued that the unavailability of ramps at the college made things difficult for them. Participants A-D also complained about not receiving resources to teach physically challenged students. The above could also be observed through the comments of the student participants.

The college does not have ramps for physically challenged students according to the participants. Some physically challenged students end up leaving the college due to the unavailability of ramps and toilets.

4.1.1.3. Inaccessibility of buildings

Participant 3: *We are struggling a lot at the college. We do not have ramps and the building is a triple storey. We are expected to use stairs in order to move from one class to another. It is really terrible. The college should build ramps for us. We also want to be successful in our education.*

Participant 4: *Buildings are not accessible for us. We are struggling with our wheelchairs and when we report it, it is like we are making things more because they do not come back to us with solutions yet we also want to study like everyone.*

Participant 5: *... I think the situation is bad when it comes to accessibility to buildings; I sometimes think that we are not treated like human beings. Something really needs to be done, but I do not know who should fix this thing of inaccessibility of buildings. We complained to the student support services and referred us to the campus manger and the campus manager also referred us to the college council. Maybe it is the responsibility of the department of higher education to make sure that we have access to the college buildings. That is all I can say.*

Participant 2: ... everything is upside down. If you want to go to lecture theatre, it becomes impossible since most of them are upstairs. The college has tried to ask lecturers to meet us downstairs and use classes that are down stairs. Some lecturers are sometimes losing patience with us since they get tired of always coming down stairs to teach us. The accessibility of buildings for us really needs a special attention because we also want to study. The college should try to talk to the department of education; maybe we can get help in terms of buildings. We sometimes feel that perhaps the department of education officials are not aware that there are physically challenged students at our college.

Participant A: ... the lecturers are trying by all means to assist, but it becomes difficult to move from upstairs to down stairs just to teach few individuals. Sometimes you end up coming for only one student to teach. This accessibility of buildings needs to be attended as matter of urgency by all the stakeholders starting from student representatives to the officials of the department of education. These students also want to cope academically. Physically challenged students need proper buildings in order to develop academically.

Participant B: This is a disaster. The buildings are not accessible for physically challenged students. The college is busy repairing parking lot for lecturers' cars instead of making sure that the buildings are accessible for physically challenged students. They are really wasting money over nothing.

Participant D: Even us as lecturers, we are struggling with the stairs. How much these physically challenged students struggle. The stairs are old and you cannot walk safely because you do not know if they are going to fall or not. The buildings should really accommodate us all and the college management should do something about this if they are still planning to enrol physically challenged students at the college.

From the research into the participants' perceptions, there was nothing that the college was doing when it came to having accessible buildings for physically challenged students. The college should have played a major role in meeting these students' academic needs. Failure on the part of the college to provide these students with accessible buildings would jeopardise the academic development of physically challenged students. Accessibility of buildings for physically challenged students was

very important for these students in order to succeed in life. The college should have catered for these students in order for them not to feel discriminated against.

Participants complained about other buildings that were prioritised by the college instead of building accessible buildings for physically challenged students, while it was by no means a simple task to develop buildings that could be used by all people equitably, a range of parties including college management, citizens and building contractors needed to work together from all perspectives to develop a physical environment that gave full consideration to ease of access and use by physically challenged students. Designing buildings that could be used equitably by all people required a thorough study of how the various users would actually use the buildings.

4.1.1.4. Inadequate support from parents

Participant1: *My parents are trying by all means to assist me. I think their problem is that they are not educated or trained about physical disabilities. I am saying this because if you ask them to assist you they both will tell you that they do not know your work. I believe it is just that they are not trained or educated at all.*

Participant A: *...and when you invite them to come to the college, they do not come. They will tell you that they are at work. This is always a problem for us as lecturers, because we know that there is so many problems at the college for physically challenged students and these problem can be resolved if parents take full responsibility of their children` education.*

Participant B: *Parents of physically challenged students are more likely to require support than parents of non-disabled children. Many of them feel that they have lost aspects of their personal identity with the role of parent/ career dominating how they feel about themselves and how other people view them.*

Participant 2: *My mother always shouts at me when I ask something about my work. I have decided not to ask her because sometimes it is like I am frustrating her. She will tell me that I am old enough to understand the college work. But I will also suggest that they receive a thorough training about our physical disabilities.*

Participant D: *Parents just lack training about physical disabilities and I think the college should organise some workshops for them so that they will fully participate in the education of their children. I do not think that they are not interested when it comes to assisting their children. ... They just need to understand their children.*

Participant 6: *Both of my parents are not working. I think that is a problem because when I ask them to help they cannot. But I won't say they are not helping me, it is just that they do not know how to assist me financially. The college should try to accommodate them by giving them training if they want us achieve good results and be independent.*

Most of the participants reported that there was not much of a role being played by parents in their education. Participants also reported that parents' desired outcomes focused on maintaining their personal identity, their physical and emotional well-being, and their skill and knowledge. Participants also indicated that most of these parents did not even come when they were called to meet the lecturers.

Participants reported that most of their parents expressed a desire for a better balance between their caring and parenting roles. Parents should have sufficient practical and financial resources to meet the needs of their physically challenged children.

Parents should have also felt confident about services they were using and have known that professionals were working in partnership with them. There should have been a need for parents to be physically and emotionally healthy in order to properly look after their children. If parents were not physically and emotionally healthy, that would have a negative impact on the education of their children. Parents would have not been able to help their children and children would not cope and develop academically. Parents did not receive professional counselling support and did not have contact with other parents. Parents should have been trained to deal with physically challenged children. The above could also be observed through the comments of the participants.

4.2. Discussion of findings

4.2.1. Introduction

The discussion that follows summarises the current research study's significant findings as revealed in the previous section, and contextualises them against existing bodies of literature.

4.2.2. Master themes

4.2.2.1. The factors affecting the academic development of physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province

The factors that affected the academic development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province were gathered from this study and what stood out as important to this study's research participants included: the lack of support from student support services and from FET college, the lack of resources, the inaccessibility of buildings and inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students. The above-mentioned constituent factors were discussed in the above section.

The Department of Education (2001) argues that limited attention has been given to addressing issues of access and participation for students categorised by government's National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) as non-traditional students. Both the South African disability movement and the South African government approach disability from a social model. As such their policy documents firmly state that institutions need to accommodate physically challenged students and remove barriers that hinder their development. Included within this category are physically challenged students who are recognised in the policy framework as having been historically disadvantaged, and as an important target group to reach in broadening the social base of the further or higher education system. For physically challenged students, inequalities in FET Colleges began with inequalities that have shaped the whole college system in South Africa.

The lack of appropriate and adequate provision for physically challenged students at the college and school level has profoundly affected access to higher education for physically challenged students. It is important to recognise that although, as already stated, the South African higher education policy framework has a strong equity agenda which includes physically challenged students, the policy also warns against institutions

recruiting students who do not have the potential to pursue further study and that they do not retain students who have no chance of success, according to the Department of Education (2001).

Naidoo (2010) argues that adequate systems need to be put in place to ensure that institutional and appropriate curricula transformation occurs and support is provided. Although legislation requires FET Colleges to include students with physical disabilities, on ground level, appropriate practice is necessary to ensure that physically challenged students in fact receive support and are accommodated in order to participate equally. There is no sense in claiming to be an institution that embraces diversity and respects students with physical challenges with legislation in place to accommodate such students if these ideals are not put into practice and experienced by physically challenged students. With the constituent themes of the lack of support from student support services and from Mango FET College, the lack of resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College and inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students,, the issue of failing to put legislation into practice cannot help being observed. Consideration should have been given to support for individual needs and the transformation of institutional barriers.

4.2.2.1.1. The lack of support from Student Support Service at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province

All the participants in this study voiced their views on the lack of support from student support services and from Mango FET College, which they reported, put them at a great disadvantage in terms of meeting their academic as well as emotional and social needs. This had affected their academic development. In light of the above, Fuller, Healey, Bradley and Hall (2004) caution us against talking of those with physical disabilities as though they are homogeneous group. Students with physical disabilities have diverse needs. Gewer (2010) mentions that there is limited knowledge of the effectiveness of learner support services within colleges. Gewer (2010) further states that where there are services they are not being utilised by the students and lecturers. Even the data from a survey of national certificate vocational (NCV) students at FET Colleges in 2009

suggested that there were limited learner support services available. Hall et al (2004) also argue that unless we recognise the difficulty in understanding disabled students' needs and display willingness and ability to accommodate those needs, it would be easy to think that legislation will in itself create, or has created a higher education environment that can accommodate the support needs of students with disabilities.

Participants also reported that they did not have access to counselling facilities and no one was giving them information about their physical disabilities. Participants mentioned that Disability Support Services should have been available at the college. It was also reported that having no disability support services had harmful effects on the emotional state of physically challenged students. With regard to counselling, the college had tried to hire some counsellors, but there was still a shortage of counsellors at the college according to the participants. The college needed to hire more counsellors that were trained for each campus. Participants also reported that lecturers that were members of student support services were not fully trained to deal with physically challenged students.

Participants also voiced the issue of lecturers who were not receiving in-service training in as far as physical challenges were concerned. All stakeholders such as lecturers, student support services, counsellors, the student representative council and the college should, as reported by participants, play a major role in assisting physically challenged students.

Participants also reported that having no ramps at the college for physically challenged students had a negative impact on their academic development. The Department of Education (1997) states the following as barriers to learning: inaccessible environments for example, the lack of ramps in education schools and harmful and negative attitudes towards learners with physical disabilities making these students more vulnerable and more likely to be excluded or to experience learning breakdown. Hall et al (2004) state that the final area in which instructors could help students with disabilities to succeed is in instructors' attitudes and behaviours. In class, lecturers should refrain from negative remarks when physically challenged students appear not to understand something, should not demean students with disabilities in front of the class, and should be more aware of the needs of disabled students. The present lack of support from the student

support services and from the college as affirmed by the participants produced a negative image for the college as a whole. According to Greyling (2008), divisions for student support services are crucial in providing individual support to students with disabilities. Greyling (2008) further adds that not only does an institution as a whole remain responsible for transformation, but all the relevant role players are responsible for creating an inclusive environment of embracing differences, rather than just accepting or tolerating students with physical disabilities.

Fuller et al (2004) mention that an integrated support service is essential to register and address individual students' support needs. Greyling (2008) also argues that although divisions for student support services are crucial in providing individual support and addressing institutional barriers, they should not be seen as the exclusive providers of support to students with disabilities. Participants also reported that an integrated support service was vital in order to meet their needs and provide effective support. Lastly, it was the college as a whole that shared the responsibility to work together in meeting physically challenged students' needs and creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment for these students. Naidoo (2010) also argues that providing the necessary support for physically challenged students can make all the difference to the academic development of physically challenged students.

4.2.2.1.2. The lack of resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

Participants reported that there was a lack of resources at Mango FET College. The lack of resources meant that the college did not have the necessary equipment to adequately cope with physically challenged students and meet their academic needs. They also mentioned that this lack of resources affected them in their academic development. The participants specifically mentioned the following as barriers to learning: unavailability of ramps and limited number of toilets. Participants complained that the unavailability of ramps made it difficult for them to move around with their wheelchairs. Physically challenged students as participants mentioned that the college did not provide student support services with adequate resources in order to meet the needs of physically challenged students at Mango FET College. Participants suggested that the college

should build ramps for physically challenged students in order to cope academically. Lecturers also complained of not having resources to teach physically challenged students at Mango FET College.

4.2.2.1.3. Inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College

Participants reported that inaccessibility of buildings was one of the barriers against coping academically. From the research participants' point of view, there was nothing that the college was doing when it came to building accessible buildings for physically challenged students. Participants complained about the stairs that were old at the college. They even suggested that college management should do something about building accessible buildings if they still wanted to enrol physically challenged students. Failure on the part of the college to provide these students with accessible buildings would harm their academic development. Dowrick et al (2005) add that students with disabilities struggle with obtaining alternative arrangements from rescheduling classes to negotiating accessible buildings for wheelchair users. Participants complained about other buildings that were prioritised by the college such as parking lots instead of building accessible buildings for physically challenged students. They also considered that all parties including college management, citizens and building contractors needed to work together from all perspectives to develop a physical environment that gave full consideration to ease of access and use by physically challenged students. UNESCO (1994) states that adequate accessibility and support services designed to meet the needs of persons with different disabilities should be provided. The college had to cater for these students in order for them not to feel discriminated against.

4.2.2.1.4. Inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College and the meaning of physical disabilities for parents

Most of the participants reported that there was not much of a role that was being played by parents in the education of physically challenged students at Mango FET College. Lecturers complained about parents not attending parents' meetings at the college. Allen and Cowdery (2009) stress that regular parent conferences or meetings should be

scheduled two or three times a year to build a good working relationship between lecturers and the parents of physically challenged students.

Parents of students with physical disabilities are faced with many disappointments and adjustments, according to Allen and Cowdery (2009). Inadequate support from parents made it difficult for physically challenged students to cope and develop academically. Participants also considered that parents of physically challenged students lacked understanding and training about physical disabilities. Participants also suggested that parents should be trained by the college in order to meet their children's needs.

The findings from this study revealed that there were many barriers experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The following factors affected the academic development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College: lack of support from student support services and from the college, lack of resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at Mango FET College and inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College. The researcher was also able to identify these barriers that hindered the academic development of physically challenged students and put these students at a disadvantage as regards excelling academically and socially. When the researcher had heard the views of the participants, the researcher hoped and believed that a positive change could be made through the findings arising from this study for such barriers to be overcome.

4.3. Summary of the main findings

During the research voyage, the study participants displayed a high interest in the topic of exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The high level of participation was due to participants' perceptions of the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. Participants really wanted to find solutions to challenges they experienced at a Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The study found that physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province were suffering from the following barriers: lack of support from student support services at the FET College, lack of resources for physically challenged students at the College, inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at the FET College and inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students at the FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

According to the data, participants revealed that they wished to have the following in place in order for them to cope spiritually, emotionally, and academically: adequate support from student support services, adequate resources, accessible buildings, and adequate support from the parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study also revealed that the parents of physically challenged students in further education and training did not show much interest in the education of their children at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

4.4. Conclusion to the findings

Howell (2000) states that the higher education system inherited by the new democratic government in South Africa in 1994 was one that had been moulded and shaped by a colonial history and the ideology of apartheid. According to the Department of Education (2001), given the degree of racial inequality that existed in the higher education system prior to 1994, it is not surprising that within the overall equity framework, there has been a large focus on increasing the participation of black students in the higher education system. Cooper (2006) further emphasises that this has resulted in a significant change in the racial profile of students at institutions.

Allen and Cowdery (2009) argue that for disabled students, inequalities in higher education begin with inequalities that have shaped the whole schooling system in South Africa. Howell (2000) further states that at this level, education provision was separated not only on the basis of race, but also on the identification and categorisation of learners into those who were regarded as 'normal' and those who were deemed to have special

needs. The limited provision that existed for disabled learners, especially black disabled learners, meant that among these learners there were very high levels of exclusion from the education system. However, in 1997 the government's White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS) estimated that approximately 70 per cent of disabled learners of school-going age were outside the general education and training system, according to ODP (1997).

Naidoo (2010) also states that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa recognises that people with physical disabilities have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability and that the establishment of equity for them requires redressing past inequity. Naidoo (2010) further adds that in addition, the overall policy framework that informs equity of access and participation for students with disabilities in South African Higher Education draws on the fundamental principles of equity and non-discrimination to create a more just society that values and respects every member, as outlined in the Constitution. According to Shevlin, Kenny and McNeela (2004), appropriate support systems are crucial to ensuring equal access for students with physical disabilities to teaching and learning.

McNeela et al (2004) further emphasise that the commitment of the institution to facilitating support and participation depends on its willingness to change physical accessibility of the institution. However, for physically challenged students to be successful, it is very important to note that any disability policy must be joined by appropriate practice. Physically challenged students at the college should get support and be accommodated as they need in order to participate equally and fully. As it was noted in the analysis and discussion of the study's findings, the above was very crucial for physically challenged students to experience college with good quality academic development and to have their academic, emotional and social needs met.

The results gleaned from the study point to the possibility that the key role players such as student support services and the college management were firstly not made aware of the physically challenged students and their unique requirements and those that were aware did not seem to be doing their level best to assist these students in order to meet their needs. The college had employed one counsellor for each campus, but that was not enough since they were not qualified to counsel these physically challenged students.

They were not fully trained to aid physically challenged students. Though there were student support services in place for students, the college did not provide them with proper training in order to assist physically challenged students.

Physically challenged students at the college were marginalised. As a result, they did not cope academically and socially. The Student Support Services together with lecturers and college management should have played a major role in supporting physically challenged students by creating an environment where these students could experience attitudes of embracing diversity and accommodating differences. Progress could be made through increased learner support from student support services and the college management, accessibility of buildings for physically challenged students and enhanced roles played by the parents of physically challenged students.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented a data analysis, interpretation of findings, master themes, discussion of findings, summary of the main findings, conclusion of the findings, and conclusion. The next chapter contains recommendations and a conclusion.

CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the findings regarding the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. This chapter provides a summary of the recommendations arising from the study of the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The significance of the study is now discussed, and then followed by recommendations for practice, and future research. The last section of the chapter discusses the limitations of the study, and provides a conclusion.

5.1. Significance of the study

As South Africa is a democratic country, the physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province need to be accommodated and be treated as normal persons. This belief provided the motivation for the study that culminated in carrying out interviews regarding the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The purpose was to explore challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It was also believed that the study would be of potential significance for lecturers at FET Colleges, and educational leaders in the quest to assist physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It was also considered as significant in enhancing democracy, and bringing long-lasting changes to FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study might also encourage other researchers to conduct studies into physical challenges with any similar organisation of their choice. The researcher hoped that this study could demonstrate to FET Colleges in

KwaZulu-Natal Province that they could very well be able to assist physically challenged students before being forced to do so.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the preceding discussion and interpretation of the research findings, the following recommendations are thus made:

Disability Desk: The Office of the Deputy State President of South Africa (1997) indicates that an understanding of physical disability as a human rights and development issue leads to a recognition and acknowledgment that people with disabilities are equal citizens and should therefore enjoy equal rights and responsibilities. The Office of the Deputy State President (1997) further states that a human rights and development approach to disabilities focuses on the removal of barriers to equal participation and the elimination of discrimination based on disability. According to the Council on Higher Education (in Naidoo, 2010), few investigations of higher education provision for people with disabilities have been undertaken in South Africa.

Giangreco (1997) also agrees that the level of development of an inclusive system in South Africa will differ in various provinces because of the disparate resources. It was hoped that the current research study would help to eliminate the present lack of research of this nature in South Africa. It was also hoped that a foundation would be laid on which future studies could be put into place in order to understand the position of physically challenged students within Further Education and Training Colleges in South Africa. The overall perception and experiences of physically challenged students at Mango FET College were found to be consistent with one another. The participants reported that the factors that affected their development and academic success at Mango FET College were: a lack of learner support from student support services and the college, inadequate resources for physically challenged students at Mango FET College, inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students at the college and inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College.

The findings of the study were absolutely consistent. For the Mango FET College to be effective in assisting physically challenged students to meet their academic and developmental needs, it would be necessary that the College addressed and also eliminated those barriers that were hindering physically challenged students. Most of the participants asserted that the college needed a disability unit for physically challenged students to be effective and develop academically. Naidoo (2010) claimed that a disability unit could host teaching workshops to sensitise and educate University lecturers about teaching disabled students, organise a disability awareness week to create awareness among the university population, and encourage disabled students to introduce themselves to and liaise with their lecturers.

The same awareness week could be of great help to physically challenged students at Mango FET College. According to Naidoo (2010), at the university of Cape Town, the Disability Services support academic access for physically challenged students in the following ways, for example: by advocacy and advice on any issues related to the disabled students' disability; by consultative and counselling support for students with disabilities; by a resource centre with literature and material relating to disability studies and disability research; by proper physical access, assistive technology and technical assistance and parking for disabled students.

In terms of the inaccessibility of buildings, Mango FET College could have buildings that are accessible to physically challenged students by working with a range of parties including the department of higher education, building contractors and administrative agencies to develop a physical environment that gives full consideration to ease of access and use by physically challenged students.

They should design buildings that can be used equitably by all people and achieve this by a thorough study of how the various users would actually use the buildings. The college should therefore seek the input of physically challenged students as required to understand their needs, and from this, develop buildings that can be easily accessed and used by as many physically challenged students as possible.

To encourage physically challenged students at the college, the college should provide support in physical aspects by considering the following points:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While a barrier-free response should essentially be done through the physical aspects of the building, there is also a need to further facilitate access through non-physical measures as well, such as the actual operation and management of the facilities and personnel measures.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically challenged students` needs may expand and diversify after the facilities have started to be used, so consideration should be given to facilities' maintenance, management and operation so that renovations can be undertaken at a later stage if required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety during an emergency is a priority issue, so there is a need to construct a disaster prevention system that encompasses both physical and personnel support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In that case, the object should not merely be the development of the building section or unit space alone. If focus is concentrated on sectional development, there is a possibility that the overall accessibility of the building will be disjointed and incomplete, so it is vital to be mindful of accessibility and ease of use throughout the building as a whole.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In existing buildings, a thorough examination should be carried out into such aspects as physically challenged students` needs, structural and cost constraints when extending or renovating, and the possibility of securing alternative routes when it is difficult to upgrade the primary route. At times, building improvement can be a simple matter of effective staff placement and equipment and systems installation or upgrading. For existing buildings, it is also crucial to prioritise the development areas according to the usage of the facilities.

5.3. Recommendations for practice

A number of important issues pertaining to challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province emerged from the study and thus the researcher suggests the following practices to researchers who intend to pursue this study:

- The researcher should be equipped with sound knowledge of physically challenged students by studying the relevant literature before undertaking the study.
- The researcher should be conversant with the topic selected before embarking on the study as it will assist to focus on the topic and find the relevant literature.
- It is also advisable to select participants with the assistance of the people on the spot.
- Some participants may keep information to themselves at first and try to reveal it later in the process. It is also advisable that the researcher should be well equipped with logical skills in conducting interviews and observing.
- The researcher should study previous studies about exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at FET Colleges as it may assist in avoiding the shortcomings experienced by past researchers.
- Researchers must avoid negative remarks about issues at the research site during the process. Try to be familiar with cultural ethics and norms of the participants and organisation in the study.
- Researchers must always remind participants about the purpose and aim of the study and its significance.

5.4. Recommendations for future research

The researcher recommends that interventions similar to those mentioned in the study for challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province should be used as they will assist these students to cope spiritually, emotionally and academically. The study also has the potential to benefit lecturers at FET Colleges, educational leaders, parents of physically challenged students

at FET Colleges and physically challenged students at FET Colleges. Finally, the outcome of this study may also broaden the scope of the said interventions in the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province as a change strategy.

5.5. Conclusion

The objectives of the study were to identify challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. It was thus aimed at exploring the various challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

The process of conducting this study offered the researcher an opportunity to gain more experience and also learn from the participants' perspectives about challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. The study was conducted successfully as all participants demonstrated positive attitudes.

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APPENDIX A1: Consent form for physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

1. Explanation of the research

- You are being asked to participate in a research study exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
- In order to participate in this study you must be a physically challenged student.

2. Your rights to participate, say no or withdraw

- You have the right to say no.
- You may change your mind at any time and withdraw.
- You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your level or evaluation.

3. Contact information for questions and concerns

- If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher on the following details:

Name: M.M. Buthelezi

Cell no: 0783011459

Email address: buthelzimm@gmail.com or 45128197@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Home Tel: 034 31 865 99

Business Tel: 034 31 81 206

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: Dr Mabatho Sedibe

The School of Psychology

University of Johannesburg

Cell no: 0824652456

4. Documentation of informed consent

- Your signature below will mean that you agree voluntarily to participate in the research study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX A2: Consent form for lecturers teaching physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

1. Explanation of the research

- You are being asked to participate in a research study exploring the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
- In order to participate in this study you must be a lecturer teaching physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province.

2. Your rights to participate, say no or withdraw

- You have the right to say no.
- You may change your mind at any time and withdraw.
- You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time.
- Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your employment as a lecturer.

3. Contact information for questions and concerns

- If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher on the following details:

Name: Mr. M.M. Buthelezi

Cell no: 078 30 11 459

Email address: buthelezimm@gmail.com / 45128197@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Business Tel: 034 31 81 206

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR: Dr M. Sedibe

The School of Psychology

University of Johannesburg

Cell no: 084 46 52 456

4. Documentation of informed consent

- Your signature below will mean that you agree voluntarily to participate in the research study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX. B: [exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at FET Colleges in KwaZulu-Natal Province] Debriefing Form

1. Purpose of the study

The study in which you have just participated was designed to:

- Explore and describe the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal province.

-If you feel uncomfortable, you are free to withdraw your data from the sample.

-You are also reminded that your results are confidential and that all results will be published anonymously as group data.

2. Additional resources

- Participants on campus can be directed to the student support services at the college.
- In the event that you feel a need to speak to a professional concerning any uncomfortable feelings arising as a result of your participation in this research, please contact the following person:

Name: Dr S. Magubane (Educational Psychologist)

Cell no: 078 70 78 225

3. Contact information

- If you are interested in learning more about the research being conducted, or the results of the research of which you were a part, please do not hesitate to contact:

Researcher: Mr M.M. Buthelezi

Cell no: 078 30 11 459

Email address: buthelzimm@gmail.com or 45128197@mylife.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX C: Letter of permission to conduct the study from the Rector of Mango FET College

DATE: 16 July 2012

Mango FET College Rector

Address: 83 Allen Street

Mango Central Office

RE: Permission to conduct research study

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study at your institution. I am currently enrolled for the degree MEd in inclusive education at the University of South Africa. I am in the process of writing my Master`s dissertation. The study is entitled “Exploring the challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education and Training College in KwaZulu-Natal Province”.

I hope that the college management will allow me to recruit six physically challenged students and four lecturers from the college to anonymously complete questionnaires. Interested physically challenged students and lecturers will be given a consent form to be signed and returned to the primary researcher.

If the approval is given, six physically challenged students and four lecturers will answer questions in a classroom setting on the campus (ITB) site. The session will take place after college hours, for 30 minutes or an hour. I am also requesting permission to use this time. The study results will be pooled for the dissertation and individual results of this study will remain absolutely confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented. No costs will be incurred by either your campus or individual participants.

Your approval to conduct this study will be highly appreciated. You may contact me at my email address: buthlezimm@gmail.com or 45128197@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Sincerely

Researcher name: M.M. Buthelezi (Mr)

Institution: University of South Africa

Supervisor: Dr M. Sedibe, University of Johannesburg

Cell number: 082 465 2456

APPENDIX D: Interview guide (Physically challenged students)

The following are the questions to be raised and areas of focus in the semi-structured interviews with participants (in no particular order).

- What do you think about learner support from student support services and from the college?
- If there are no supports, how you think they should be provided and how you think you can be assisted to cope academically?
- Do you think that there are adequate resources for physically challenged students at the college? If there are, name them and if there is none, what you personally think should be done?
- What can you say about buildings at the college?
- Do you think they are accessible for physically challenged students? If you think they are not, suggest things that should be done and who should do those things.
- In terms of support from parents of physically challenged students, tell me the support/s you receive from them since some of you are minors.
- In what ways do you receive support, if you receive it, and what are your suggestions concerning support from parents?

APPENDIX E: Interview guide (Lecturers teaching physically challenged students)

The following are the questions to be raised and areas of focus in the semi-structured interviews with participants (in no particular order).

- What do you think about learner support from student support services and from the college?
- If there are no supports, how you think they should be provided and how do you think physically challenged students can be assisted to cope academically?
- Do you think that there are adequate resources for physically challenged students at the college? If there are, name them and if there is none, what do you personally think should be done?
- What can you say about buildings at the college?
- Do you think they are accessible for physically challenged students? If you think they are not, suggest things that should be done and who should do those things.
- In terms of support from parents of physically challenged students, do you think that these students receive adequate support from their parents?
- In what ways do they receive it, if they receive it and what are your suggestions concerning support from parents?

APPENDIX F: Example of identification of themes

Themes

1. The lack of support from student support services and from the college.
2. The lack of resources.
3. The inaccessibility of buildings for physically challenged students.
4. The inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students.

APPENDIX G: Example of clustering of themes into master theme

Cluster 1: The factors affecting the academic development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province (themes 1, 2, 3, and 4).

APPENDIX H: Example of a summary table

Cluster 1: The factors affecting the academic development of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province

Constituent Themes	Keywords	Location
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of support from Student Support services and from the College. 	<p>“no proper access to counselling facilities”</p> <p>“student support services should be trained”</p> <p>“more student counsellors to be employed”</p> <p>“we feel inferior and discriminated”</p>	<p>line 5</p> <p>lines 7-8</p> <p>lines 13-18 and lines 35-36</p> <p>line 19</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of resources at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. 	<p>“toilet facilities are in a bad situation”</p> <p>“college does not have ramps for us”</p>	<p>lines 76-79</p> <p>lines 83-86, 93-94 and lines 97-99</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccessibility of buildings at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. 	<p>“buildings are not accessible for us”</p>	<p>lines 133-151 and lines 154-166</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate support from parents of physically challenged students at Mango FET College in KwaZulu-Natal Province. 	<p>“they are not educated or trained about physical disabilities”</p>	<p>lines 184-187</p>

APPENDIX I: Letter from editor

LANGUAGE QUALITY ASSURANCE

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby certify that I have language edited the dissertation, “Exploring challenges experienced by physically challenged students at a Further Education and Training College in Kwazulu-Natal province”, prepared by Michael Mbongiseni Buthelezi for the Master of Education, and submitted to the University of South Africa. I am satisfied that provided the changes I have made to the text are effected, the language is of a standard fit for publication.



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